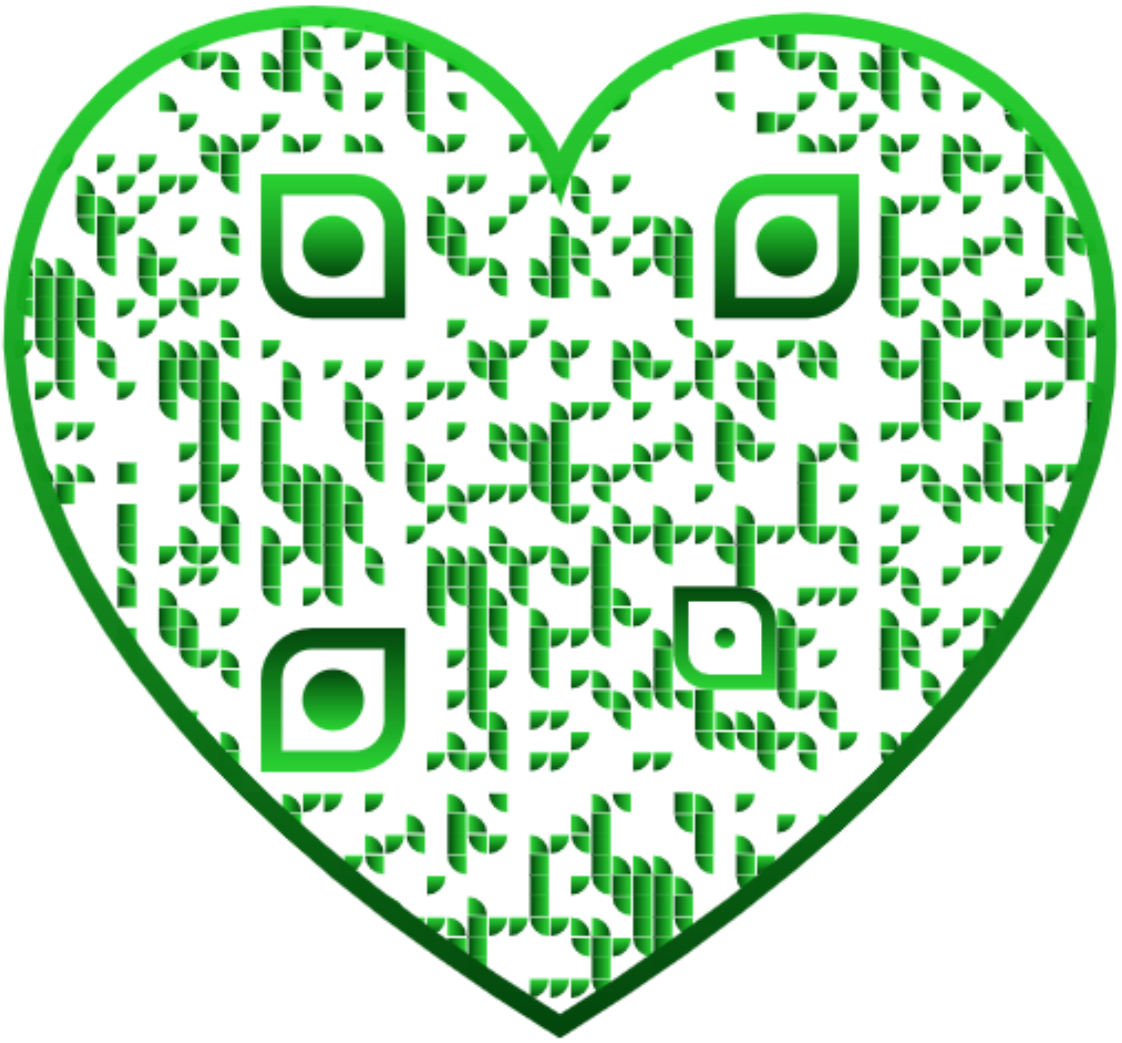
VISITORS FROM OUTER SPACE–
OR DEMONS OF THE MIND?

UFOs:

A SCIENTIFIC ENIGMA

D. A. J. SEARGENT



UFOs: A Scientific Enigma

By

D.A.J. Seargent

Copyright: 1978

Contents:

Foreword

1 - Strange Apparitions In The Sky

2 - Can They Be Classified?

3 - Are There Patterns in Time?

4 - Are There Patterns in Space?

5 - What Could They Be?

6 - Contacteeism - the Religion of the Flying Saucer

Conclusion

Foreword

Mankind has always enjoyed a good mystery, something which opens the door into a realm beyond the mundane; a realm wherein may lie all manner of mysterious and mind-boggling entities. Tales of the supernormal never fail to appeal and there is within most of us a secret wish that at least some of these far-fetched stories may possess a kernel of truth.

The UFO mystery, therefore, could not fail to exert a powerful and widespread appeal. Here is something stepping straight from the pages of the wildest science fiction directly into reality - or so it seems to many people. Needless to say, books sounding more like science fiction than anything purporting to be factual have been presented as sober fact, and have proven extremely popular because of this. Likewise, a host of new religious cults have sprung up, basing their beliefs upon messages allegedly received, by chosen individuals, from a kindly race of spacemen - pilots of flying saucers which are what UFOs really are.

On the other hand, an equal and opposite reaction has developed, often assisted by the same kind of emotive reaction which is seen among the believers. It is as if questions about the existence of UFOs, like questions concerning religious topics, divide people into two sharply opposing camps the believers and the non-believers. The parallel with religious questions should be borne in mind; both touch on the existence or non-existence of something extra-mundane and it seems to be the willingness or otherwise to admit to something over and above the everyday world which arouses, more than anything else, people's deepest hopes and fears.

This present work, hopefully, steers a middle course. It is not intended to comfort those who are feverishly searching for evidence that will make belief in flying saucers scientifically respectable, but neither is it a negative work designed to assist the scoffer in his non-belief. There are sufficient books available for either class of reader. The present book is for those who suspend belief and disbelief alike until sufficient evidence has been amassed and analysed to allow either affirmation or rejection to be rational assent or non-concurrence rather than emotional belief or disbelief.

The UFO problem will be treated in the manner of any unsolved puzzle, i.e. as a problem which may have a solution within the framework of scientific knowledge (already acquired or yet to be acquired), and not as a mystery upon which we may only look and wonder.

However, this is not to dogmatically affirm that science, still less physical science, holds a ready answer to the problem. Neither is it to say that the problem must be reduced to some-thing mundane. There may well be genuine 'new empirical information' (in Professor Hynek's words) encountered in UFO phenomenon and, if this is true, science and even our conception of the universe itself may be in for some very rude shocks. It may even be discovered that the scientific explanation confirms the cultist's beliefs, or that the phenomenon is found to involve something far more revolutionary than even the wildest cultist had ever dreamed. We shall just have to wait and (hopefully) see.

In the chapters which follow I shall attempt to present the UFO as a phenomenon to be studied. That is to say, I shall keep preconceived ideas about the nature of the phenomenon to a

minimum and concentrate on what we know, or what we think we know, about these strange apparitions, thereby building up a picture (albeit a sketchy one) of the real, or, at least, the reported-as-real, UFO whereby the various speculations concerning the nature of the phenomenon can be tested.

In the true sense of the term, therefore, I hope this will be a 'scientific' book about UFOs.

D.S.

~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~

1 - Strange Apparitions In The Sky

When early Man looked up into the great dome of sky above his head and first took notice of the myriad lights suspended there, his experience must have been one of total bewilderment; bewilderment reflected today in what we call the UFO experience. In other words, for early Man, everything in the sky was a UFO he could not identify anything in that mysterious great vault which seemed so different, so utterly alien to the features of his normal, everyday world. Surely the sky must be the realm of supernatural beings - god who could hold back or give the life-giving rain, who controlled and wielded the lightning and thunder, and whose friendship Man so eagerly desired.

Thus, Man started his history surrounded by UFOs and supernatural beings, and the progress of science has seen the gradual elimination of these UFOs and their transference to the class of IFOs (Identified Flying Objects). We know now what the sun is and what the moon is. We know much about the nature of the stars and even those most mysterious of objects, the comets, are at last being made to conform to the scientific picture of the world. What is left up there in the vault of sky that the common man sees but cannot identify? What remains of the cast population of UFOs? Does anything remain of the mystery? Are there still rogue phenomena which do not fit into our scientific world-view? Or is everything now, at last, accounted for?

Many people would like to believe that everything is now accounted for. That our little minds now stand within reach of knowing everything, but others maintain a realistic doubt. These latter believe that some of the lights and objects seen in the skies

are not yet within the realm of our understanding; that, in other words, there still remains of the vast former population of unidentified objects a small remnant to which the term 'UFO' - unidentified flying object - may still reasonably be applied.

Frequently, weird explanations and fanciful theories have been put forward in what may seem a desperate attempt to bring these rogue objects within the orb of science. Equally, some fantastic attempts have been made to identify them with some known and well-established scientific phenomenon. Yet, with all this theory and counter-theory, we are still left with a great question mark. It is with this question mark, and the hope of erasing same, that we are now concerned.

If there are UFOs, if there are still things floating around above our heads which we cannot bring under the blanket of our present-day scientific knowledge, they must, presumably, have certain features which differentiate them from those things in the sky which are known to us, and these features should facilitate the recognition of these rogues both in reports of the present day and in the accounts of ancient times, assuming that the present-day rogues are not some new phenomenon which was non-existent in former ages.

The existence or non-existence of the present-day types of UFO in earlier epochs may be clouded somewhat by the fact that most of the things which we now treat as quite commonplace were equally UFOs then and were equally likely to generate fanciful reports and theories. Comets are an especial case in this regard, as the early accounts of these objects prove. Sifting out UFOs, in the present-day sense, from all these other phenomena is not an easy task, and many accounts which appear similar to the modern UFO reports may, in fact, be reports of such easily identifiables (by present-day

standards) as comets and aurorae.

The converse, of course, may also be true. For instance, the following ancient Roman report has, been preserved for us by Chambers and included by him in a catalogue of comets com-

piled in the latter part of the last century. The report states that (in the year 75 BC) 'A spark fell from a star and grew larger as it approached the earth to become as large as the moon and as bright as the sun on a cloudy day. On returning to the sky, it took the form of a torch.' This could really be a fanciful account of a comet, but there are certain odd features about it. For instance, translated, the word 'torch' in Roman chronicles refers to a class of object which, although often associated with comets by modern historians of astronomy -including Chambers, was specifically distinguished from comets by Pliny. Presumably 'torches' were bright meteors of the type we would now term 'fireballs' or 'bolides'. Not a few may have been meteorites.

Was the object of 75 BC a meteor? If it was, it was certainly a strange one. However, we are put at a disadvantage by not knowing the time interval over which the phenomenon occurred. If the recorded events occurred over several nights or weeks, the object must have been a comet, but if it all happened within the space of a few minutes, it may have been a meteor. If it took several hours to happen, what then?

We may (remembering Pliny's identification - if that is what it was - of 'torches' with meteors) translate the record as follows: 'A light descended from a star or star-like object and approached the earth, until it presented a disc about as large as the moon and of a pearly-silver colour like the sun seen through a layer of cloud. Its

brightness at this stage was about the same as the sun shining through a layer of middle level cloud. Later it rose away from the ground and returned to the sky, where it sped away like a meteor.' A report like that would surely find its way to UFO Central these days! But are we right in paraphrasing it in these terms? This is a question which, I'm afraid, must go unanswered.

The question of paraphrasing ancient reports - indeed of translating ancient reports - is a touchy one, as it can provide ample ground for any number of UFO reports. What are we to make, for instance of the 'burning beam' which crossed the Roman sky in 62 BC? Was it a meteor, aurora, comet, 'rocket* lightning (a rare, slow form of lightning which seems to be intermediate between ordinary streak lightning and ball lightning), sun dog or UFO ?

Likewise, what are we to believe that the theologian Tertullian saw when he claimed to have been able to observe, on several mornings, the spires of a city (presumably the New Jerusalem) floating in the dawn-lit sky?

Then there was the strange, brilliant Iight which was said to have appeared at the death of an abbot in AD 1320 on the Feast of St Gregory, and the many medieval paintings and frescos depicting mysterious, aerial happenings which may not have always been confined to the artist's imagination. An example of this kind of painting is the one showing an apparent battle in the skies over Nuremberg in 1561, waged between an assortment of cylindrical objects, spheres, spear-like objects and crosses. Throughout the Middle Ages there are any amount of drawings and records of flying crosses, choirs of angels and the like which, although obviously interpreted according to the symbols of Roman Catholic

theology, sound suspiciously like some of the UFO sightings of the present century. Indeed, if the variety and spectacle of those early records are read in anything like a literal sense, the present-day phenomenon must be only a shadow of a now faded glory!

However, there is reason to believe that the early reports (if they are of the same phenomenon) are exaggerated to a greater extent than their modern counterparts. This conclusion would seem to follow from an examination of early accounts of other rare and spectacular phenomena, as for instance comets and aurorae. Early comets are frequently made to seem far more. brilliant than any comet could possibly be, and they have even, on one or two occasions, been said to have given off sulphurous-smelling fumes! Likewise, the brilliant. blood-red display of a great aurora has, at times, fired overly-fertile imaginations, as is amply exemplified by the following description by noted French surgeon Ambroise Pare, of a great aurora (not a comet - despite Fare's description of the phenomenon as a 'comet', modern authorities now believe it to have been an aurora), in the year 1528. Pare states:

So horrible was it, so terrible, so great a fright did it engender in the populace, that some died of fear, others fell sick. This comet [sic] was the colour of blood; at the summit of it was seen the shape of a bent arm holding a great sword as if about to strike. At the end of the blade there were three stars. On both sides of the rays of this comet [sic] were seen a great number of axes, knives, bloody swords, among which were a great number of hideous human faces, with beards and bristling hair.

If an aurora like this were to occur, even in the sophisticated twentieth century, I dare say a good many of us would 'fall sick' also. However, there is little fear of that, as long as we recognise

aurorae for what they are and realise that they are not the sort of things which possess hairy faces or display knives dripping with blood.

Fear and pre-conceived belief cause strange things to be seen at times, and this must be kept in mind when assessing present-day UFO reports just as firmly as when studying records from a by-gone age. At times (of which the Pare incident seems a first-class example) otherwise sensible people may look at a normal, if spectacular, object and 'see' an unbelievable monstrosity.

At times this would seem to verge on outright hallucination, as, for instance, when comets were said to have been accompanied by sulphurous fumes. Of course, the 'ink blot' experiment is well known to psychologists and must be quite widespread in our perceptions of nature outside the consulting room, and reports such as Fare's certainly appear to be extreme examples of the ink blot phenomenon carried to such extremes that hallucination, not merely misinterpretation, becomes intertwined with the genuine perception of the actual phenomenon and, in the memory after the event, takes over from reality.

It would be comforting to the sceptic if all cases of reported UFOs, both ancient and modern, could be explained in the manner of Fare's monstrous aurora, but alas the entire problem is not as easy as this. It is, I believe, true that many fantastic accounts of present-day UFOs can be explained in this manner just as easily as the ancient reports of comets and aurorae, but herein lies an important point.

The only way we can really know that these medieval reports were comets or aurorae, and not some truly fantastic phenomenon that

has since become extinct, is by the similarity that they share (despite elaborations, exaggerations and even hallucinations) with recent comets and aurorae. In other words, the records are not so fantastic as to render the reported phenomenon unidentifiable. Beyond all the extravagance, the phenomenon is still recognisable as a comet or an aurora and we can, in most cases (in all cases where there is sufficient information, especially in different chronicles) distinguish which 'portent' was a comet, which an aurora, meteor, etc.

Likewise, while it is true that people today frequently report Venus as a huge spaceship moving across the sky, or Mars with a pendulous lobe underneath, there still remains sufficient accuracy in their descriptions to allow the investigator, in nearly every instance, to quite quickly identify the things seen as Venus or Mars. On at least one occasion the US Air Force tested public reaction by sending aloft a number of flares and then stating that a UFO had been seen, inviting any witnesses to contact them. Reports came in, but they were not reports of silver discs or unnatural lights; still less of close encounters or little green men. They were reports of flares!

It has been my personal experience too that extreme misinterpretations of normal objects Come from either a single witness or a very small group (say two persons) where one person is very excitable and quick to convince his companions that they are really seeing the same thing as he believes himself to be witnessing. Cases where two or more independent witnesses report the same thing (and there are many thousands of such cases in Professor Hynek's UFO Catalogue) are in a different category altogether and, even if the sighting is fantastic, it is grossly illogical for an investigator to assume that all the witnesses are

independently suffering from the same hallucination.

Reverting to Pare for a moment, it is quite possible that, had he had company when he made his observation, his companions may have become convinced that they also saw knives and hairy faces, but although many may have 'fallen sick* at the sight of a brilliant, blood-red blaze of light in the night sky, where are the other records of knives and hairy faces in the sky of 1528?

However, there is possibly one interesting factor to be considered in any comparison with the exaggerated reports of modern people and those ancient records which seem largely the product of illusion and even hallucination, and this is, the apparent greater ease of hallucination in earlier times. In a more child-like age, especially one in which the lines of demarcation between 'natural' and 'supernormal' were not as rigidly drawn as they are today, it may be expected that people were more likely to dream dreams and see visions, but also, as pointed out by Aldous Huxley, their diet and frequent fastings may have been a large contributory factor as; well. (*)

Thus, in a diet where sugar was not overly plentiful, the efficiency of the brain in keeping down subconscious images would not be as high as one in which people's main dietary problem is too much, rather than too little, food. Add to this strong religious emotions and periods of voluntary (and sometimes involuntary) fasting and the stage is set for the appearance of visions and possibly psychic phenomena Huxley implies that many people of early ages would have, because of their diet, a brain sugar content not altogether incomparable to someone to-day under the influence of the drug LSD - surely this must have had some effect on records of spectacular and strange events.

When all is considered, therefore, I think that early records of strange phenomena are more likely to contain a greater illusory and hallucinatory component than more recent reports, although the factor of illusion must still be borne in mind in recent reports of strange phenomena as well. Nevertheless, just as the real phenomena show through in those modern UFO reports which are really only false identifications of known phenomena, the early records of those phenomena which were unidentified to the people of the time, but which are now regarded as 'natural', are not too fantastic for the modern historian to determine the nature of the phenomenon being chronicled.

---

[*] Aldous Huxley 'Heaven and Hell'. Appendix II.

Regarding early records of UFOs (in the modern sense), what can we say with the above remarks in mind?

First, I think that early reports of UFOs should be sufficiently accurate to facilitate recognition by a modern investigator, but they will also probably give the impression (already noted) that the early representatives were more spectacular than their modern counterparts. This would seem to follow naturally from the above considerations, and also conforms with early reports of comets and aurorae.

Secondly, just as seemingly scientifically interesting UFO reports of today can usually be separated from those 'UFOs' which are mis-perceptions of some already known phenomenon, I think that (providing, of course, that the early record is sufficiently detailed) ancient UFOs can be distinguished from similar false alarms.

There are not, unfortunately, many early UFO records which contain sufficient data to be of much value to the modern investigator. This is, of course, quite understandable, as the phenomenon is a rare one and even today has been witnessed by only 9 per cent or less of the population. In the more sparsely-populated Middle Ages far fewer people must have experienced this phenomenon than in our own crowded times. (There is a possibility that this argument may not be correct. Thus if the phenomenon is essentially a psychic phenomenon the above conclusion may not necessarily follow in fact, if simplicity of life and lack of sugar lead to greater psychic awareness, the Middle Ages may have produced a greater proportion of potential UFO witnesses than the present day. It would be interesting to know if there really was a greater pro-portion of witnesses per thousand head of population in the Middle Ages or early times, but, of course, this is a question that cannot be answered.)

Nevertheless, the number of early observations of strange objects which are clear enough for some comparison to be drawn with the modern reports is sufficient to tentatively draw the conclusion that the same objects which we now call UFOs were also recorded among the unidentified objects of yester-year. In other words, today's UFOs are a residue of unidentified phenomena, persisting from an age where everything that appeared in the sky was unidentified.

Thus, the strange objects allegedly seen over Nuremberg in 1561 may well bear more than a superficial resemblance to the cylinders and spheres reported today The light of 1320 was probably an early representative of today's nocturnal UFOs, and so on. Multiplying examples may be of dubious value, but to demonstrate that these early UFOs are not merely mistranslations of records of

known phenomena, I will give a few more examples for your consideration without passing any comment about their possible identification - the reader can form his own opinions about whether (if seen nowadays) they would be called 'UFOs' or not.

~~

August 3, 989. Three brilliant objects seen over Japan. They were later said to join together into a single object

1. A flying object 'shaped like a drum, about 20 feet in diameter' emerged from an inland sea off western Japan.

January 2, 1458. A bright object resembling the full moon was seen in the sky, followed by 'curious signs' in the sky and on earth.

March 8, 1468. A dark object accompanied by a 'sound like a wheel' flew from Mt Kasuga towards the west at midnight.

~~

The list could be extended for several pages, but this will be enough for the present. To> be of any real value in comparison with modern sightings, such early reports need to display patterns or features shared with those of the present day. Unfortunately, as I have already mentioned, few early reports are of the standard the modern investigator desires and, equally unfortunately, many modern reports are as bad! Furthermore, patterns and common features prove all too elusive.

Nevertheless, some features seem to have been established in modern reports and, if these also seem to be shared by early

records, we have another reason for believing the phenomena to be, in fact, identical.

Reports of modern UFOs tell us that these objects are often luminous, especially when seen at night, that they are usually (particularly when seen in the daylight sky) of such a shape as to give rise to descriptions like 'hat', 'saucer' and the like, for one particular shape, and 'cylinder', 'mushroom', 'cigar', for others. Likewise these objects are said to appear silver by day (sometimes surrounded by a blue hazel or else completely dark, and by night to be, most frequently of a yellow or yellowish-red colour.

More controversial, because it is harder to accept in terms of 'commonsense', and yet equally strongly attested by credible witnesses and large numbers of accurate reports, is the alleged fact that these objects land - sometimes causing damage or other physical effects on the area near where the landing takes place. And (most mind-boggling of all) such landings are not infrequently associated with sightings of creatures which appear semi-human and do not correspond to any known life-form.

Do early reports share these features also?

Taking into account the brevity of early records and the inevitable inaccuracy of which we spoke earlier, these features appear through many records with surprising clarity.

Thus, a large, luminous 'earthenware vessel' floated over the Kii Province of Japan at midnight on October 27, 1180. What would be the colour and shape of a luminous 'earthenware vessel'?

On December 5, 1577, in Germany, many 'flying hats' were seen during the day. They were said to have been of many colours, but

the majority were black. This report mentions the earth appearing 'yellow and bloody and ... covered with hats' implying (I would think) strong yellow-red illumination and the landing of many of the 'hats'.

Back in Japan, in May 1606, a fiery red wheel hovered, whirling, over the Nijo Castle.

More fantastic-sounding (but still corresponding to many modern reports) are those records involving creatures, one of which concerned an event in about 800 in which peasants in France claimed contact with, and capture of. a being from 'Magonia', a celestial region where strange creatures ride the sky in chariots made of cloud.

In much later times, during September 1768, the German poet Goethe claimed to have witnessed mysterious lights and what appeared to be luminous beings near an old stone quarry.

The accounts of life-forms will be considered again in a later chapter, as they are worthy of considerable discussion themselves. Not merely because of their intrinsic interest, but because of their strange nature, they are the reports most in need of examination. Lights in the sky, or even flying discs, may have a simple explanation, but if these humanoid reports are true, the entire problem is lifted to a different realm altogether and the phenomenon takes on a new and more puzzling aspect.

Returning to our present task, large lights (in the sense of bright objects of considerable size) would seem to have had an early representative in the full-moon-like object which appeared in the sky at Kamakura on September 12 1271. just before the planned

execution of the priest Nichiren. So frightened did the executioners become, that Nichiren's life was spared.

Hardly an ancient report, but at least an early one in the sense that it occurred well before the terms 'UFO' and 'flying saucer' were invented, was the object which appeared over Texas in January 1878. The especial importance of this sighting, for our present purposes, lies in the fact that, long before any preconceived notions about 'flying saucers", the object was described as 'a large, dark, saucer'.

Equally striking, from the viewpoint of parallel descriptions between pre-twentieth century and modern descriptions of flying objects, must be the English object of December 7, 1872, described at the time as appearing like a flying haystack, and the French object of September 7, 1954, also described as resembling a haystack.

It is also interesting to take note of another similarity between early and modern observations; not, this time, in the features of the reported objects themselves, but in the reactions of people who attempt to find on explanation within the accepted scientific framework of the day. An instructive case in this regard is the sighting of strange nocturnal lights by General Yoritsume of Japan, on September 24 1235. These lights behaved much as do modern reported UFOs, swinging and circling in the south-western sky and moving, all night, in loops and odd paths.

The General was (understandably) very perplexed by this strange phenomenon and ordered his consultants to look into the matter, which they dutifully did and soon produced their report. The phenomenon was perfectly according In their report: it was merely

the wind making the stars sway! I wonder if, 700 years from now, people will look back On the 'naturalistic' explanations of Klass and Menzal with the same condescending attitude as we view the explanation of this early sighting?

We could go on ad nauseam presenting modern reports and historical or ancient counterparts. What about the circular drawings in caves, for instance? Are they records of prehistoric UFOs? They certainly look like drawings of the same sort of objects that are being reported today, and there is nothing absurd in identifying them as such, but identification must remain, at best, tentative and uncertain, until further information is forthcoming.

However, one thing must be borne firmly in mind in connection with any talk of early UFOs. Even if all early (historic and prehistoric records which seem to imply the sighting of UFOs are positively confirmed to be accurate, we are still not entitled to jump to any Von Daniken-type conclusion concerning the visitation of our planet by 'aliens'. And, especially, we must not fall into the trap of supposing that ancient myths are actual stories of such encounters, or that the complex buildings and other artifacts unearthed by archaeologists represent the work of some extraterrestrial intelligence.

The blind assertion of this last point in particular (without a great deal of firm and convincing evidence - which no-one has yet produced) is folly itself and can only gain any credence whatsoever in a society which believes that Man before the turn of the seventeenth century was just about incapable of doing anything spectacular.

It is surely an embarrassment to anyone holding such twentieth-

century sets of values to find that, in many respects, ancient and even prehistoric Man was superior to ourselves. The invocation of extraterrestrials to account for the finds of archaeology whilst still preserving the alleged 'superiority' of modern man (and, incidentally, the particular brand of socio-political evolution which goes with this belief) is a splendid piece of pseudo-science which must go down in history as a worthy twentieth-century counterpart of the 'sports of nature" explanation of fossils, a hypothesis which attempted to do justice to the findings of geology, whilst preserving the recent date of the Creation derived by Bishop Usser's misinterpretation of the Book of Genesis.

The materialistic interpretation of ancient myths supported by the followers of Von Daniken and his counterparts, likewise (in my opinion) does not do sufficient justice to the imaginative and symbolic faculties of the minds of early peoples. No-one today would suggest that science fiction writers such as Asimov or Verne required actual perception of the subjects of their stories; and yet the writers of those wonderful science

fiction' stories of ancient India, in which aerial flight is predicted in Jules Verne fashion, are regarded as having had such poor imaginations that they must have actually seen the flying ships of which they wrote! Surely it is as important to recognise the distinction between real records (which are presented as factual accounts) and stories or symbolic legends in ancient writings as it is to recognise the difference between Barbican's trip to the moon and that of Neil Armstrong. And, of course, writings concerning moralistic parables and religious mysticism present another field entirely, distinguishable from them both.

However, at a different level, the persistence of the UFO

throughout the ages tends to confirm its significance as a regular part of our environment, rather than as something that comes from elsewhere only at rare intervals and then returns again to the wide blue yonder. In fact, the localised nature of the phenomenon would seem to make it a more integral part of our environment than other recorded portents such as comets (which, though astronomical, are nevertheless a regular part of the Solar System environment to which the earth also belongs). That is to say, they are so localised that if they were very rare they would probably not have been recorded at all, either today or in times past.

The fact that we do have modern reports and can make what I believe to be a strong argument in favour of historical records of this phenomenon, seems to suggest that these occurrences are too frequent to be the work of something which comes to this planet and goes away again they seem to be representative of something that has been here all along.

This point will become more pertinent later in this book, where it will need to be considered afresh. My only excuse for raising it prematurely at this juncture is to try to give pause to anyone who may feel that support for ancient UFOs is tantamount to support for ancient astronauts.

Returning once more to the theme of this present chapter, it may be well to point out that early telescopic astronomers, like their modern counterparts, also reported unidentified objects (astronomers do report UFOs - this is a documented fact, despite assertions to the contrary by the uninformed. In fact, it is remarkable that an astronomer, occupied by his nocturnal work in an observatory dome with only a small opening to the sky, should ever see a UFO, at least whilst on observatory duty). Some early

sightings by astronomers have been preserved in Chambers' book, printed in the latter years of the last century, and, while it is not certain that they can be associated with the modern UFO, they at least provide food for thought. His records are as follows:

October 15, 1789. Schroter observed unidentified objects passing in front of the moon.

1. Similar objects were seen passing in front of the moon, by Abbo.

2. Lamey reported that he had witnessed unidentified objects passing in front of the moon.

Such objects transiting the moon are sometimes explained as 'floaters' in the eye of the observer; however, this explanation, even if it accounts for the above (and this is, of course, debatable), fails to do justice to the following, the strangest of Chambers' accounts:

April 24, 1874. Safarik was observing the moon in daylight, about half past three in the afternoon, with the aid of a four-inch refracting telescope, when he was startled by the appearance of a 'star' in front of the disc of the moon. He watched the object for a few minutes, in which time it slowly drifted across the lunar disc, travelling in an ESE to WNW direction, finally leaving the disc and shining in the daytime sky, with about the same brilliance as the stars Sirius or Vega seen in like conditions.

To the above reports may be added others from early years as well as from today about unidentified objects being seen accidentally through telescopes. On at least one occasion, in the early 1960s, such an object was even photographed, but little information as to

the nature of these objects can be determined. Flying spindles were allegedly seen through a telescope by an astronomer in the early 1880s, but such accidental observations mostly refer to small, apparently distant objects whose size and shape cannot be determined and whose nature is anybody's guess.

The first really impressive wave of UFO sightings, or should I say the first wave to have been recorded adequately as such, reached its height in 1897 had as its main concentration the central west of the USA. This is generally known as the 'Airship Mystery', as many of the seemingly physical sightings suggested a large, lighter-than-air craft which was never identified with any experimental aircraft of those early years of flight. In fact its flying ability, mysterious appearances and disappearances seemed to place it well ahead of anything being seriously considered at the time. Furthermore, the reports of its occupants were strange to say the, least and, like the 'humanoid' reports of today's UFOs, they were not consistent.

Thus a report from Springfield, Illinois, dated April 15, 1897, states that the airship's occupants were two men and a woman, apparently of normal appearance. This was not the experience of Alexander Hamilton of Leroy, Kansas, four days later, however. He encountered six airship occupants, whom he described as 'six of the strangest beings I have ever seen' and remarked that their appearance was 'hideous'.

Somewhere in between these two descriptions we find the account of Judge Lawrence A. Byrne of Arkansas. He saw an airship on April 23, 1897, together with a 'crew' of 'Japs' who spoke an unknown foreign language. Presumably the Judge's description of the beings as being 'like Japs' (his wording does not necessarily imply that he believed them to be Japanese, only to look Japanese)

suggests the same type of small, oriental-looking entity so often reported in association with modern UFOs.

On the other end of the size spectrum, as it were, lies the Williamstown (Michigan) sighting of April 17, 1897, in which at least a dozen farmers watched an object manoeuvring in the sky for an hour. Upon landing, the craft was found to contain a 'giant' some three metres tall, who spoke in tones that were 'a musical ... repetition of bellowings'.

The general properties of this 'flap' seem broadly similar to those of the 'flaps' of more recent times. It should be mentioned also that, in common with more recent 'flaps' these 'hard' sightings were contemporary with many instances of nocturnal lights which, while assumed to be the lights carried by airships, were not obviously associated with any such craft.

A similar airship 'flap' occurred in 1909 and early 1910, with sightings this time coming from places as far separated as Wales and New Zealand.

One of the New Zealand sightings is rather interesting in view of the witnesses, who included the mayor (presumably of Invercargill, the site of the event) the vicar and a policeman -not a group to be apt to tell 'tall stories'! The sighting occurred in January 1910 and involved the appearance of a cigar-shaped object which hovered at an altitude of 30 metres. A man appeared at a lateral door and shouted some words in an un-known language, after which the door closed and the object accelerated and was lost to sight.

Sightings continued sporadically over the following years,

including some spectacular ones, such as the observation of a cigar-shaped object with four or five 1.2 metre tall dwarfs in Hamburg, Germany, during June 1914 and a landed circular object in Hubbell, Nebraska, on February 22, 1922, from which emerged - apparently flying - a creature over 2.4 metres tall. But the next major mystery concerning things seen in the sky occurred in the early to mid-1930s and was centred primarily on Scandinavia.

Beginning in 1932, large, unidentified aeroplanes started appearing over Sweden, Norway and Finland. They were always described as very large, grey in colour, were inevitably unmarked and performed strange and (quite often) seemingly dangerous manoeuvres, for example, flying in raging blizzards and equally inclement weather. They would circle over towns and forts, sometimes flying in groups and often cutting their engines whilst they circled. They were large craft; one at least was declared, by a group of five witnesses, to have eight propellers!

The USA too had its share of 'ghost fivers' during this time." One, for instance, was heard over New York on December 27, 1933, flying 'blind' at night and during a fierce snow storm. The mystery plane apparently circled the city for most of the night (consuming, one would imagine, a great amount of fuel), but it never crashed and always eluded identification - none of the nearby airfields had any planes aloft, in fact none of their planes could have remained aloft for so long in that kind of weather and it would have been foolhardy in the extreme for any pilot to have tried.

Come Christmas week 1933, in Scandinavia, the mystery fliers were there in force. Official investigations were ordered and initiated, but to no avail.

In February 1934. a mystery aeroplane circled London. apparently (like its New York counterpart) in weather that left a lot to be desired from a flier's point of view.

However, although other countries were not entirely forgotten by the mystery flier, Scandinavia seems to have been his favourite area. The Scandinavian reports are instructive as they seem to hint at something more than a mere aerial mystery involving some mad pilot who cared little about preserving his life; they point to something far more reminiscent of the US airship mystery of the 1890s and, it would seem, the UFO-mystery of today.

Consider these reports for example:

Wednesday. January 10, 1934. Trondheim. Norway. Two landings were reported on this night. One landing involved a plane settling down on the water and was accompanied by a great-beam of light' according to witnesses. Such 'beams' were a fairly regular part of the 1897 airship and are still reported during today's UFO events.

Sunday, January 21, 1934. At 6 pm a crowd of people at Bengtsforsen, Jamtland, saw a brilliant nocturnal light the size of the half-moon, accompanied by the sound of a heavy engine. The light and noise were experienced, also in Indal, west of Bengtsforsen, sometime after 6 pm. where it circled the area for ten minutes before vanishing westwards.

Tuesday, January 23, 1934. Outside Tromso, Norway, a mystery plane shone a brilliant light on to a ship's deck, illuminating it like the day. The ship's captain could observe the pilot in the mystery plane (the pilot's cabin was brilliantly illuminated, a curious state of affairs for such a nocturnal exercise, but one which accords

quite readily with modern UFO reports). The description of the pilot was, apparently, that of a normal man wearing a large hood and goggles.

Unlike the airship flap of the 1890s, there do not appear to have been any encounters with strange beings during the 'ghost flyer' scare, and the above report is the nearest we seem to come to an 'occupant case'.

Be this as it may, there is one final case which needs mentioning because, if it can be believed, it surely rules out any idea that what was happening over Scandinavia was some form of illegal or military operation.

On Thursday, February 11, 1937, the crew of a fishing boat, the Fram noted sometime after 9 pm a large aeroplane resting on the water just outside Kvalsvik. Thinking that the plane might be in need of help, the captain of the Fram turned the boat towards it, whereupon the red and green lights of the plane were extinguished and the plane reportedly became enveloped in a cloud and vanished!

The ghost flyer scare faded out towards the end of the 1930s. but that did not spell the end of reports of strange things seen in the sky. We need only remember the 'Foo Fight-ers', those mystery balls of fire seen by wartime pilots, looking so much like some secret weapon, yet apparently quite harmless, to see that this was far from the end of the story.

Neither were the Foo Fighters alone in those war-torn skies, it would seem. I was told quite recently, by a lady whose character would surely stand any test, of a mysterious, smoke-trailing, flying

disc seen over Victoria, Australia, during the later war years, probably about 1944. This daylight sighting was, according to this witness, similar to the 'saucers' of a few years later, but was merely brushed off as 'something unknown' at the time and not considered any further.

The post-war year of 1946 saw another wave of unidentified objects over Europe; the famous 'ghost rockets' which proved to be such able successors to the 'ghost fliers' of the previous decade. These 'rockets' were seen from Scandinavia to Greece and appeared to be under intelligent control. They were both photographed and tracked on radar.

Yet their origin is still a mystery no evidence yet discovered (or at least made known) suggests that there is any credibility in the theory proposed at the time that they were some Russian secret weapon being tested over Europe (not a wise move on the Russians' part, it would seem - why risk one of their secret weapons falling into the hands of another country when they have ample room over Siberia to try out their devices?). Rather, the several thousands of sightings made at the time look suspiciously like those earlier and later reports that constitute our list of 'unidentifieds'.

As we all know, as 1946 gave way to 1947 so the 'ghost planes' and 'ghost rockets' gave way to the modern conception of the UFO; the flying nocturnal light (which was constant in all the previous waves) and the flying daylight disc which, while sharing with its earlier counterparts the ability to appear and disappear quickly and mysteriously and elude identification, to land and at times apparently disgorge 'occupants' variously described as 'dwarfs', 'normal sized', 'giants'. 'monsters', 'hideous' and 'handsome', also

has features of its own which we shall discuss more fully later.,

What we may note now however is that, just as the appearance and behaviour of earlier sightings predisposed belief towards lighter-than-air dirigibles in an age when such craft were not quite developed in reality, then in giant aeroplanes and smaller specimens which could stay aloft all night in the most hideous meteorological conditions, and thirdly to remote controlled rockets, which once more were probably more sophisticated than anything off the drawing board at the time, so today - since 1947 - we seem plagued by objects which appear to be some kind of very highly sophisticated craft, probably employed for space flight, but beyond anything known at the present time.

Such considerations have led to the popular view that these things must come from some more highly advanced extraterrestrial civilisation. However, such a theory seems to treat the lessons of history too lightly, that is to say, it seems too like those rather glib explanations which saw the 'ghost planes' of the 1930s as secret smugglers, or the 'ghost rockets' of the 1940s as Russian secret weapons. We have no more evidence hard evidence in support of the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis (ETH) for the recent sightings than the investigators of the 30s and 40s had for their theories, and surely we need far more evidence for the ETH to stand up than they did for their own theories. Yet the UFOs are as uncompromising as ever. For all the speculation, all we seem to have are 'ghost space ships' - fully as phantom-like as the planes and rockets of a few decades ago.

What has appeared with the flying discs that we did not encounter earlier, however, is a massive public reaction - a reaction which has left few people in the Western industrialised world completely

untouched, irrespective of their personal beliefs, concerning the UFO phenomenon. For instance, the involvement of governmental bodies (e.g. the Air Force) in the investigation of the phenomenon has aroused considerable speculation, not merely about the phenomenon itself, but about the Air Force and government as well. We see this especially in the USA, but Australia has not been untouched either, and paranoiac tales about alleged and fantastic censorship and government plots do circulate from time to time, especially among the less stable fringe.

A certain amount of censorship and debunking is, of course, not a bad thing, indeed in something as potentially explosive as the UFO problem it becomes necessary. But this I meant that wild and unrestricted speculation about the mystery cannot help but fire public imagination, especially the fertile imagination of the lunatic fringe, and a situation may well develop where large sections of the population could be manipulated by UFO propaganda.

For instance, a very tricky situation indeed may arise if the populace was continually subjected to the belief that the UFOs were Russian secret weapons being tested over Western air space, or that they were some sophisticated type of spy plane, secretly developed in China. Enough people would only need to be convinced that they were secretly being watched, or that they were likely to have a nuclear weapon accidentally (?) crash on to their heads, to cause considerable lack of ease within the country, and smart propagandists could easily exploit this lack of ease into something even more menacing.

Mark Antony's speech to the Roman mob could, since the advent of radio and television, come into virtually every home and a modern Antony would not find it difficult to arouse feelings

against a foreign power if his 'friends and countrymen' had become convinced that hardware from that power was continually passing, menacingly, over, their very heads.

Nevertheless, playing down the phenomenon to the general public must never mean shelving a proper and sober scientific investigation. Unfortunately, though, such investigation has been until quite recently a very poor relation of the biased type of 'research' which involves the amassing of information which seems to support one's own viewpoint and the interpretation such material according to one's pet theory.

At one end of the spectrum, this has been carried out by the sceptics who try to squash all reports into the mould their personal ideas require and discard all those which will not fit as being hoaxes or the product of unstable minds. At the other end, we have those who try to prove that 'UFOs are real and come from outer space' and who, like the sceptics they so violently oppose, concentrate on those reports which seem consistent with their theory and either reject or pass quickly and quietly over those which cannot be so interpreted. Thus, for instance, we are told that the airships of the 1890s were really space ships and the descriptions, given by the people of the time, although seemingly more consistent with descriptions of airships than of space ships, were, nevertheless really accounts of the latter seen through eyes distorted by current beliefs.

It does not seem to occur to those who maintain this view that many of the early reports were made by people every bit as credible as those of today who report flying discs. Also many of the early reports are multiple witness cases with a high degree of consistency between witnesses, which makes them equally as

strong as today's cases. But if they were misinterpretations of something else, why can't today's sightings also be misinterpretations, as the sceptics say?

Fortunately, a ray of hope for those of us who believe in the efficacy of detached scientific research has at long last shone into the murk, in the person of Professor J. Allen Hynek and his assistants at the Centre for UFO studies (CUFOS) in the United States and its contact points throughout the rest of the world. Professor Hynek and CUFOS are attempting, from a massive collection of UFO reports (already running into tens of thousands), to discover any patterns, features or set parameters which might suggest a clue to the true nature of the phenomenon and its relationship to the rest of Nature.

Hynek suspects (although he puts forward no theory as to the nature of the UFO phenomenon - he, as a scientist, must wait for the results before he speculates) that the answer to the problem, if it can be proved scientifically, may shed new light on the nature of existence, just as the solving of the mystery of the aurora shed new light on solar processes and interplanetary space.

Of course, it is highly possible that the solution of the UFO problem is not possible within the bounds of present scientific knowledge. Hynek points out that the nature of the aurora could not have been solved within the framework of nineteenth-century physics. But it was not study of the aurora alone that necessitated the change from the billiard-ball physics of last century to the present physics in which atoms are no longer seen as being indivisible. But once the possibility of atomic divisibility became recognised, the phenomenon of the aurora followed quite naturally. So did a number of other phenomena seemingly

unconnected with the aurora, for instance the streamers and condensations in the gas tails of comets.

Similarly, it is highly possible that study of the UFO phenomenon in a vacuum, as it were, will not produce results. Maybe a shift of our scientific position may need to precede the solution, or perhaps simultaneous study of a number of seemingly disconnected phenomena may be needed. In any case, I believe it is probable that the solution of the mystery, if and when it does come, may include the solution of other mysteries as well - I feel, personally, that a satisfactory solution to the problem of psychic phenomena, for instance, will result in such a change in the scientific perspective as to render the UFO problem capable of solution also. The converse of this is also probably true. (This is not to say that UFOs are psychic phenomena, any more than saying that because the solution of the problem of the aurora caused an advance in science such that comet tails were also explained, comet tails are aurorae.)

Leaving aside, for the time being, such considerations as these, we may well ask just what happened to bring about this change of heart among some members of the scientific community, especially someone initially as sceptical and even hostile as Professor Hynek?

Professor Hynek himself answers that it was the regularity in the UFO reports which basically led to his change of mind, and, I dare say, most other scientists (once sceptical, but now willing to at least admit to the possibility of there being something worth studying in the phenomenon) would make a similar answer.

Regularities do indeed occur, as we have seen and will see again later, and regularities are the stuff of science. I mean by this that

the existence of a regularity is tantamount to the existence of a law - laws are only regularities which have been established and to which formal expression has been given and the aim and object of science is the description and analysis of reality by means of the discovery of laws. Such findings of regularities, then, means that study of UFOs ought to be a subject of science - the UFO problem is a scientific topic; a scientific enigma.

However, finding regularities and explaining those regularities (i.e. fitting them into the overall regularities which govern Nature as a whole) are two different problems. The same regularities in reports could be explained in a variety of ways. For instance, is the fact that similarities in UFO reports coming from illiterate peasants in Latin America and from college students in Australia illustrative of a regularity in the objective stimulus of both sets of reports? Or does it, instead, point to some similarity in the mental processes of both sets of witnesses, or to some constant social or environmental pressure to which both groups of witnesses are subjected?

Just as there are physical theories by means of which objective Nature is analysed, so there are corresponding theories by which our processes of reasoning is analysed. The corpus of such theories is known as 'scientific method'. It has been described, at root, merely clear thinking, and there is certainly justification in such a description. Now, one of the important tools of scientific method is known as 'Occum's Razor' (named after its alleged discoverer, William of Occum or Ockham), which says, in effect, that the simplest explanation of a phenomenon is the one most likely to be correct.

Actually, it must be considered as the mental formulation of something like the property of Nature which Bertrand Russell

termed 'The Law of Cosmic Laziness', i.e. the property of Nature to take the 'easy way out' all the time. Nature is as uncomplicated as it could be while still possessing the properties we observe it to have; therefore, a theory which is more likely to truly apply to Nature, or to some studied aspect of it, is the one which involves the least number of hypotheses, makes the least number of ad hoc assumptions and follows most naturally from an account of the phenomenon in question. Occum's Razor is the bearing of this in mind whilst theorising - it is the 'Razor' a theorist must always hold in hand, ready to 'shave' possible theories of unnecessary and unwanted complications and a sumptions.

Now, how is Occum's Razor to be applied to the phenomenon of observed regularities in UFO reports?

The answer, I think, is as follows. Suppose we have two sets of reports which seem consistent, but which come from persons of vastly different backgrounds (viz, illiterate Latin American peasants and Australian college students). We have the following choices open to us in explaining the regularities and consistencies: either both sets of people were distorting reality (or the truth) in a similar manner (due, presumably, to some innate property of the human mind, as the social backgrounds are so dissimilar that sociological causes seem unlikely) or, alternatively, they report the same thing because they were both exposed to essentially the same external stimulus which they more or less faithfully reported.

On Occum's principle, the latter is, I believe, the more tenable alternative, as it postulates only one unknown - the external stimulus whereas the first alternative evokes questions regarding mental functions which are remarkably constant considering the diversity in sociological backgrounds and conditions under which

they function, and which need to be explained before the question of the external stimulus is even considered.

We have at least two unknowns (external stimulus and mental functions) in this hypothesis as against only one (the external stimulus) in the first. And, even worse, we still have not explained why we felt it necessary to speculate upon these strange mental functions in the first place. An extra hypothesis, by Occum's Razor, needs far more justification than the mere hopeful (but, in this case, not even attained) elimination of an awkward objective stimulus.

(Incidentally, I chose Latin-American peasants as examples because they have reported objects - even 'creatures' - remarkably similar to those reported by people in countries like Australia and the USA, even though many of the Latin-American witnesses were illiterate and had never even heard of UFOs).

Applying Occum's Razor to the problem in this manner gives, I firmly believe, more than enough justification to the scientist for taking the whole problem very seriously indeed. In fact, he is not acting as a scientist if he does not!

Once the scientist realises that there are regularities displayed by the phenomenon, once it has become a subject of study - a scientific enigma - the next step will be to attempt classification, and to this we shall now turn.

~~~~~~
~~~~~~

2 - Can They Be Classified?

How does one go about classifying something unknown? Are we in fact chasing will-o'-the-wisps in looking for some classification system in regard to such a phenomenon as UFOs?

Different investigators have, from time to time, put forward their own systems, duly dividing reported objects into types 1, 2, etc., and drawing sharply differentiated lines between one type and another. This has tended to cause confusion unless the particular system being considered is borne in mind - a 'type 1 sighting' in one system is nothing like a 'type 1 sighting' in a different system, for example. But even worse confusion follows if we try to establish an exact system.

For instance, in 1955, the US Air Force used 434 cases of unidentifieds to draw up a type classification system comprised of 12 basic categories (apparently differentiated mainly according to shape and behaviour). The trouble is, a very few of these twelve types have been reported since I If we want to extend the Air Force's effort and bring the list up to date, we might find ourselves faced with a very long list of types indeed.

For this reason it is better to concentrate on classes rather than types as a means of differentiation. By this I mean that we should not be too exact in trying to distinguish UFOs from one another on the basis of minute details, but rather concentrate upon building up a very few broad prototypes or general classes which seem to act best as a pigeon-holing device for the greatest number of reported objects.

The possibility of a few 'erratics' ('any other variety', so to speak) which do not quite fit any class must be remembered; most classification systems need to admit a few erratics, and the slightly nebulous nature of the boundary lines between classes must also be remembered. These are general 'faults' of classification systems in general, not merely of classifications of UFOs.

The broad nature of classification systems for UFOs is also necessitated by any desire to have a system broad enough to include UFOs, as reported today, with those of former ages and still retain a system sufficiently concise to be workable. In other words, we want a system which can accommodate, within a single class, the sightings of daylight airships of the 1890s, daytime fairy boats of olden times, and daylight saucers of today, to use just one set of examples. Such a broad system, too, enables the differences as well as the similarities between reported phenomena of the same general class to be compared and may therefore enable more information to be derived than an overly restrictive system would allow.

The system which Professor Hynek has adopted hopefully walks the fine line between being too restrictive and too broad and, with slight modifications to one of its categories, is the one which I will present here as the most workable.

The system is as follows:

(a) Nocturnal lights.

(b) Daylight discs - here extended beyond Hynek's stricter, classification to include daytime objects which may not be disclike. However, the term 'disc' will be retained to conform with Hynek's

general terminology.

(c) Radar-visual cases.

(d) Close encounters of types 1,2 and 3.

It may be seen at a glance that this system classifies reports first and objects second. In other words, whereas there is no reason to believe that a UFO seen in daylight or observed as a blip on a radar screen is a different type of object from one seen as a light in the night sky, such observational variations make all the difference in the descriptions of witnesses and may (as for instance in class 'c' where visual reports are supported by instrumental evidence) radically alter the value of the data in the eyes of science.

Similarly, there is unlikely to be any difference between an object seen close at hand and one seen in the distance, but again the scientific value may well vary, not to mention the possible reactions of the witnesses.

Of course, the system breaks down where an object is observed in bright twilight, having features of class 'a' and class 'b', or where something is seen close at hand by one witness and at a distance by another. But such difficulties are no more than may reasonably be expected with any system of classification, and the observer-centred character of the system, with its emphasis on the fact that reports, not objects, form the immediate basis of our study and consequently reports, not objects, are what must first and foremost be classified, outweighs any disadvantages that the system may be thought to have.

We shall now have a closer look at these classes of UFO reports, and try to see if there are any intra-class and inter-class

characteristics of the reported objects which remain relatively constant and may give us a clue to the nature of the phenomenon.

Class (a) - Nocturnal Lights

This is the most 'popular' class of reports, possibly because such lights are more frequent, or at least more conspicuous to a greater number of people, than small discs in the daylight sky or large objects so near the ground that they can be seen for only a very limited distance. However, there may be another reason for their popularity as well, in that people are probably more likely to report a mere light in the night sky than they are an object in any other report-class. Nocturnal lights are the most normal, the most natural-looking and the least mysterious of all UFOs.

For myself, I would not be too embarrassed about mentioning a nocturnal light in any company - especially as I could (if people started looking at me a little strangely) always come back with the answer 'Oh well, it could always have been a satellite or meteor, you know.' But I would certainly pick my company before recounting a sighting in any of the other categories, especially a close encounter of any of the three kinds (most especially a close encounter of the third kind - as the reader will realise when this type of close encounter is discussed!).

Such considerations may not say a great deal about the UFO phenomenon itself, but they surely throw some light on human psychology - is it not a strange psychological property of human beings that (in the majority of cases) we are relatively willing to admit the existence of something unknown, but remain reticent about taking this admission to the logical conclusion that the unknown may be very different from anything we now know?

Logically, if X is an unknown there is no less reason for suspecting that it might not display property Y (which is so strange as to seem to insult common sense) than there is for supposing it to display property Z (which is only slightly different from some properties possessed by some known things). With specific reference to UFOs, there is no a priori reason for not believing that these unknowns will have properties which seem totally mind-boggling, no reason for believing that fantastic UFO reports are any less credible than common or garden variety lights in the night sky.

Yet such quasi-philosophical reasoning will not be likely to convince. I cannot entirely convince my own emotional preconceptions of the truth of what my reason knows and I, with everyone else, feel a greater ease when confronted by nocturnal light phenomena than with the more 'exotic' varieties.

Nocturnal lights, then, are the most frequently reported, but what do they look like?

The easiest way of answering this is to take brief looks at some reported specimens. This we shall now proceed to do, drawing our examples from as wide a time period as possible, in the hope of ascertaining whether there has been any evolution, with the passage of time, of the features of this phenomenon. Very early reports. I would here refer the reader back to the previous chapter, where early portents are discussed, for instance, the object like a 'full moon' which appeared on January 2, 1458 and 'stars' which appeared to circle the moon on March 17 of the same year.

March 1897. A number of 'ghost lights' were sighted nightly on Saginaw Bay, off Caseville, creating a minor ghost mystery at the time. The lights seem to have been at low altitude.

April 1897. Farmer George Parks and his wife were crossing a field when they saw a very bright object, estimated to be about 100 feet above the ground, emitting a humming sound and dropping a 'wheel' on to the ground.

February 1, 1908. A brilliant reddish light, two or three times brighter than Jupiter, passed over Kent, Washington, and was seen by many.

During that same week 'coloured lights' were reported high in the atmosphere over Tacoma.

December 15, 1909. Mr. A.W. Norris of Mabelvale reported seeing a strange light, apparently about 300 feet above him. It travelled south at a rapid rate and disappeared after a couple of moments. He described the light as being like the headlight of an automobile, but that it rose and fell rather like a bird in flight. He also mentioned that the night was cloudy, which ruled out astronomical phenomena and confined the altitude to a few thousand feet at most and probably to the 300 feet estimated by Mr Norris.

January 14, 1966. Weston, Mass. A very bright but very small source of light was observed by four observers. The light was brighter than Venus and was white but with a possible yellowish tint. It was not perfectly stationary, but definitely 'wandered about' in relation to some foreground trees.

1960, Sometime between June and August. A pigmy nocturnal light was seen by five people in the early hours of the morning. The light appeared to be spherical and was apparently 'interested' in a lone tree standing in the middle of a bare field. The light was smaller than 3 feet in diameter, possibly as small as 18 inches, but

very brilliant. The witnesses maintained that its behaviour seemed to display intelligence, although they also commented that it could not (because of its small size) be capable of carrying intelligent creatures. Its colour changed through the whole range of the visible spectrum over a somewhat irregular period averaging about two seconds (this spectral change is often reported as a property of nocturnal lights).

We could go on into thousands of cases of nocturnal lights, but the above gives a fair cross section of their range.

A few remarks should be made about these phenomena. First, the phenomena according to the reports do not seem to blatantly break the known laws of Nature, although they may appear to stretch them to their limit or act eccentrically within the general framework of natural laws.

Secondly, some of the movements seem from a human point of view to be pointless; for instance, lights are sometimes seen to undertake manoeuvres which are almost like a random walk covering a small area of sky. This effect is not created by illusion while watching a stationary object, as it has been confirmed by sighting the object within some frame of reference, such as the branches of a nearby tree. There are also alleged photographs of the time exposure trail of such randomly moving lights, which, if valid (the big 'if' with all UFO photographs), would certainly rule out optical effects.

Other motions such as 'bobbings', 'behaving like yo-yos on a string' and the like, have also been mentioned (compare here the cases of December 15, 1909 and January 14, 1966).

Thirdly, there is no clear evidence that the nocturnal light phenomena have altered with the passage of time, although this conclusion may be partly influenced by the rather sketchy reports of earlier years (and not only of earlier years, unfortunately).

Fourthly, the phenomena quite frequently behave as if they are under intelligent control. They seem to be 'guided', in other words. This is not inconsistent with the seeming randomness so often reported. It only means that the phenomena can appear intelligent at times.

'Intelligence' is used here in the biological sense, not as opposed to 'stupid' - the behaviour of some nocturnal lights would not win an award for intelligence in the latter sense; darting at planes, circling one another in the sky without apparent reason, all seem to point to a low rather than to a high intelligence, although, of course, we are certainly not justified in asserting this conclusion. Neither are we justified in asserting that the nocturnal light phenomena really are controlled by intelligence, only that they sometimes behave as if they were.

We may add a fifth observation which, whilst not constant, may be important in any final assessment of the phenomena, viz, that the size of some of the objects (e.g. the last case mentioned in the above short list) would make the presence of intelligent creatures an impossibility. Intelligence requires a complex organism, and a complex organism requires a brain composed of staggeringly vast numbers of cells.

Even if a being was composed of cells as small as those of a virus, to be intelligent it would still need a brain too large to be supported by a body of less than six inches at the very least. This must be

kept in mind when any spaceship hypothesis is put forward as an explanation of the UFO phenomenon; any hypothesis, to be taken seriously, must explain all UFO cases with equal validity, even reports of small, glowing objects and those occasional reports of small objects inhabited by tiny men (and there are, believe it or not, a few such reports, apparently seriously presented).

Unfortunately, at least at the time of writing, no-one has succeeded in procuring a spectrogram of a nocturnal light and we cannot, therefore, tell whether the light is being emitted from a gaseous or solid source. The reported colours tend to concentrate around the orange-yellow end of the spectrum which, if originating in a solid body, would indicate temperatures of between about two thousand and ten thousand degrees Celsius. However, until we know whether the spectrum is indeed continuous or the emission spectrum of gases (atmospheric?) we can make no hard and fast statements about temperature.

Mention of the spectra of these lights also raises another interesting point, which is the oft-reported ability of luminous UFOs to go through the whole visible range of the spectrum. In fact, in view of the intermittent visibility of some nocturnal lights it is possible that they may go into the invisible regions of the spectrum as well. Just what conclusion can be drawn from this behaviour cannot be imagined at this stage but, hopefully, a sufficiently detailed spectrogram will be obtained one day and this may make the position a little clearer.

Although neither Hynek nor, to my knowledge, anyone else has ever included in a classification system nocturnal objects which were not described as lights, there are records, ancient and modern, of dark nocturnal objects which, we may speculate, may

be nocturnal UFOs with the luminous process temporarily or permanently terminated.

An early instance of this type of UFO was the dark object which 'made a sound like a wheel' as it flew from Mt. Kasuga 0apan) on March 8, 1468, at midnight. This early phenomenon has a modern counterpart, the report of which only reached the ACOS office a few days before these words were written. At present, I lack specific details of this Australian report, except that it included the observation of a 'dark object' (presumably silhouetted against the starlit sky) seen at about one o'clock in the morning.

Other odd reports which I have encountered from time to time include an early morning observation of queer, triangular 'clouds' which moved about the sky in a seemingly purposeful manner, and, although possibly glowing, or at least 'white' enough to be visible, were hardly to be described as 'lights'.

Such observations, however, are not very frequent (and the above two examples not, at this moment, well attested). Thus from the viewpoint of a classification system based on reports they carry little weight, although, of course, in any final analysis of the UFO problem itself they will need to be given their proper place in the overall corpus of evidence.

A somewhat more satisfactory report of a non-luminous (presumably dark) object which displayed lights on its outline was reported by a professional astronomer in 1965 and is reproduced on p. 66 of Hynek's The UFO Experience. This object, which Hynek considers to be a borderline case between true nocturnal lights and daylight discs, was first seen shortly after sunset in a still bright and starless sky.

It was during this early stage of the sighting that the shape of the object could be distinguished, and it was described as silvery (glowing, or was it essentially dark but catching the sun's rays?) and subtended at an angle of two or three degrees (this reported size, coming from an astronomer, is likely to be fairly accurate). As the phenomenon moved away to the east, it faded into a darkening sky as a bright, white, starlike object, at one stage apparently 'bobbing' (moving from five to ten degrees up and down) for about five minutes.

From the above well-documented observation, and the previous two not-so-well-documented cases, there appears reason to believe that at least some nocturnal lights do not represent the entire object (or whatever it is) but that the entire phenomenon has a dark sector as well as a luminous one. It is tempting to explain this in terms of the observed lights being carried by a dark craft, but observations do not unambiguously point to this conclusion and, be this as it may, such an explanation could hardly account for every nocturnal light, as for instance that of 1960.

Class (b) - Daylight Discs

This class includes, as its name suggests, those unidentified flying objects which have been reportedly seen in the daytime. However the word 'disc' may be a little confusing, as all daylight sightings are not necessarily discoid. This is especially true of earlier sightings, as will be seen shortly. However, the flying discs predominate in modern reports, and for this reason the term 'daylight disc' is a practical one to use in classifying contemporary reports.

It is not impossible, of course, that daylight objects greatly

different from discs are regularly observed but, if this is true, their observers must consider them insufficiently strange to be worth reporting and, as we are only dealing here with the classification of reports and not primarily objects, our basis of classification would seem to rest mostly upon discs.

The following is a short list of daylight sightings over a considerable period of time, indicating what appears to be a certain evolution in this type of report, an evolution which is fat more apparent than anything displayed by the nocturnal phenomenon.

April 16, 1879. The citizens of Linn Grove reported seeing a large airship that morning. It is reported to have landed, but when approached to within 700 yards by the townspeople, it spread four 'monstrous wings', rose into the air, and discharged two large boulders (apparently ballast) before leaving. This was just one of a host of 'airship' sightings about this time, most of which are more correctly included among the various types of close encounter cases. Most, however, resemble the above in being reports of something that looked like a flying machine, often with wings and propellers and sometimes with wheels.

September 24, 1909. A huge, elliptical airship with wings passed over Sweden at an altitude of about 300 feet.

A number of strange reports were generated about this time, including one of a 'titanic white bird' with flapping wings, seen in California earlier in the year.

January 1910. A cigar-shaped object was observed by several people of high repute at Invercargill, New Zealand.

March 1945. A hunter near Belfast (Maine) reported seeing an

enormous, elongated flying object which appeared to 'crash', but then took off again with a humming sound and a shower of silvery threads. The witness also claimed that the object began to spin as it rose.

January 15, 1968. Three Hills, Alb. An odd-looking object which seemed to glow a fluorescent greenish-blue and looked like 'a stunted dill pickle' was seen by a number of observers.

This latter example is by far the most representative of the modern daylight disc sightings. The glow is not always present, although it is often reported. In connection with this point, it is remarkable that many of the daylight sightings report silvery objects which are then assumed to be of metallic construction. However, as was pointed out by Mr P. Klass, a real metallic object (e.g. a high-flying aeroplane) appears dark rather than shiny whilst luminous objects seen in daylight tend to display the silvery appearance often reported as characteristic of daylight UFOs.

For instance, the bright stars and planets appear silvery when observed in daylight (I have seen Jupiter in broad daylight with the aid of powerful binoculars, and its appearance is that of a small silver disc). Likewise, the rare phenomenon of a daylight comet (such as those of October 1965 - Ikeya-Seki - or of February 1976 - West's) are described as being of a silvery appearance. Thus, it seems reasonable that at least some of the silvery look of many daylight discs may be due to the luminous properties of these objects.

At times, though, the disc does appear dark; sometimes it is even seen to catch the sunlight and glint with a strong silver light as an aircraft would under similar conditions. Many of the photographs

allegedly taken of these daytime sightings seem to reveal dark and possibly metallic objects.

The reported motions of these daylight objects causes difficulties in explanation. Thus, extremely rapid accelerations are often reported, but any sound resembling a sonic boom is very seldom reported (I can think of only one which could reasonably be interpreted as a sonic boom, and another which may be interpreted in this manner). Likewise, if these things are really craft, as many people insist that they are, their occupants must be subjected (during these accelerations) to stresses which reduce a physical body to jelly.

The effects of such extremely rapid accelerations as are sometimes reported would seem to make the physical reality of the flying discs a debatable topic, as, in fact, do the accelerations themselves, defying (or so it seems) Newton's Second Law of Motion. However, the physical unreality of the objects conflicts with other well-attested observations (e.g. the reflection of sunlight from seemingly metallic surfaces) which seem to indicate the physical reality of the objects.

Another motion which is detected from time to time is a kind of tumbling, generally associated with objects of an oval or cylindrical nature. This type of motion is somewhat suggestive of a rocket nose-cone. However, this explanation is hardly a tenable one, judging by the fact that such tumbling UFOs have been observed at a low or relatively low altitude without an accompanying fireball and without a smoke trail. Nose-cones coming this close to the ground produce considerable luminous and smoke effects, frequently accompanied by sonic effects as well. This is completely different from any kind of daylight UFO.

One motion of these daylight objects which is difficult to explain and which, in fact, seems completely pointless, is the tendency of these reported objects to hug the contours of the landscape. In other words, they fly high over mountains and hills and fall lower when flying over valleys or lowlands, frequently hovering above bodies of water such as lakes and ponds. This type of flight pattern is displayed even when the objects are high above the ground, i.e. when there is no danger of the object crashing into mountains or hills or encountering any other difficulty which would necessitate such flight.

This motion is quite a regular feature of daylight discs and it has been reported for nocturnal lights as well, although of course it would not be as noticeable for the latter class of objects as the irregularities of the landscape would not be as visible. Perhaps, though, the 'bobbing' so often noted would correspond to undulations in the level of the ground, if this could be seen.

An interesting observation sometimes encountered in reports of these objects is one which seems to take us beyond the strictly physical and (possibly) into a wider realm. I am referring to the 'feeling' sometimes associated with these and other UFO sightings. One fairly recent case immediately comes to mind involving the sighting of several daylight objects, over a period of years, by a man of apparently balanced mind.

The sightings themselves were not what could be called spectacular (one of the most impressive, for instance, was the sighting of a cylindrical, silvery object which seemed to travel with a tumbling motion) but the interesting feature was the man's insistence that, at the time of each sighting, he had a strong feeling that he was 'meant to see it'. He further remarked that he had, at

other times, observed a great variety of other types of objects which did not seem to be of mysterious origin (presumably satellites and the like), but these were unaccompanied by any similar feeling.

The question of feelings raises some interesting issues as to the relationship between the observed object and the mind of the perceiver. Is the observation of a UFO the same type of experience as, say, the observation of a meteor, or are there factors involved in the former which are not present in the latter?

The very mention of a possible relationship between the object and the perceiver (other than the simple one of stimulus and perception) raises again the question of the physical reality of these objects. We tend to think in clear-cut divisions: the physical and the immaterial, the objective and the imaginary, etc. If anything is mind-dependent it must, we assume, be an hallucination; if something is objective, it must be completely independent of, and consequently unaffected by, the human mind.

If UFOs, or anything else, seem to straddle the gap, we instinctively feel that something is wrong and that either the psychological or the physical features must go. The ETH enthusiasts throw out the psychological, the sceptics throw out the physical - each group being sure that it is only throwing away the bathwater when, in fact, it could well be throwing out part of the baby as well.

If the above-mentioned series of sightings seem to point to a psychological or psychic factor, let me balance the scales by referring to a case which strongly indicates the presence of a physical factor independent of the witnesses.

The witnesses of this object were two in number, and I shall simply refer to them as A and B. The event occurred on the Australian coast, fairly early in the morning - A was taking a swim in the public baths and B was walking along the foreshore, apparently independently of A, although the two knew each other. A was in the water at the time of the sighting and, initially, tried to explain away the object as a high flying, large bird, although fully conscious that this was not the real explanation. A called to B, who by this time was walking near the pool, saying something like. 'What's that up there - a bird or a flying saucer?' to which B reportedly replied 'I think it's a flying saucer!'

The two watched the object 'float' downwards, executing the 'falling leaf motion so often observed in daylight discs, until it reached a stationary position, after which it shot away at tremendous speed 'as if it would be over Alaska in no time.'

Shortly afterwards, an aeroplane crossed the same area of sky previously occupied by the UFO, giving A some idea of comparative sizes. A seemed convinced that both plane and UFO were at similar altitudes (this is a subjective judgment of course, and may be wildly wrong) and thereby judged the UFO to be huge.

A complained that the experience was a shocking one, taking several months to recover from, a statement which seems to indicate a rather strong resistance to the acceptance of the UFOs, at least prior to the sighting.

The struggle for belief and final acceptance of the sighting must have brought about a radical change of attitude, however, as acquaintances of A claim that A now 'drives them mad about the flying saucer', indicating a certain obsession with the topic. A has

also been described as eccentric apparently a description of A's state of mind both before and after the sighting although (as far as I know) there has been no actual mental illness. Nevertheless, the description 'eccentric' would, one may well think, deprive this sighting of any scientific value. However this raises a very important issue regarding the evaluation of UFO reports is the report of an 'eccentric' person to be discounted solely for this reason?

In the present case, at least, I would argue that the answer should be 'no'. I say this for the following reasons.

First, this was not a single witness report. B also saw the object and subsequent descriptions of the object by B (which shall be discussed shortly) make it improbable that B was merely trying to 'humour' A by pretending to see the saucer.

Secondly, the appearance and behaviour of the UFO is entirely consistent with other reports of daylight discs; the case was a typical one. This is hard to explain, unless A and B were both well acquainted with the subject (which, apparently, they were not) or a bona fide UFO was seen.

Thirdly, and most importantly from the point of view of both the veracity of this case and the physical nature of daylight UFOs in general, is, incredibly, the inconsistency of the reported appearance of the object in the descriptions of A and B. Let me explain this seemingly contradictory statement, first by relating what A and B did actually report.

The inconsistency was in the appearance only, not in the object's behaviour. The object as described by A was a silvery craft shaped

approximately like two cones joined at their bases.

The object as described by B, on the other hand, was the typical silver disc of considerably greater diameter than thickness.

This is the inconsistency; so how is it to be resolved?

The answer lies in the fact that A suffers from a myopic eye condition and is forced to wear spectacles. However, at the time of the sighting he did not have his spectacles on (A was swimming, it will be remembered). Now, the object as described by A was, according to the opinion of an oculist, exactly as a flat disc would appear as seen with myopic, uncorrected eyes! Thus the solution of this apparent inconsistency may well speak loudly not only in support of the validity of this particular sighting, but also in favour of the solid, non-hallucinatory, nature of this class of UFOs in general.

Class (c) - Radar-Visual Cases

Daylight discs are, in a sense, disappointing. Despite the presence of daylight and the reports of reliable witnesses, a really crisp, scientifically precise description is very hard to come by. The witnesses almost always display the same bewilderment as is found among those who see nocturnal lights.

It is as if the experience of a UFO - seen either at night or in broad daylight - is so dissimilar to normal experiences that our vocabulary is not quite able to express it. Even in quite simple cases this element of strangeness persists and places a natural limit on the accuracy of any description of the phenomenon.

The possibility of obtaining the cold, non-human scrutiny of a

mechanical instrument, therefore, is an appealing one. However, getting satisfactory instrumental data is not as easy as it may appear at first sight. Thus we not only lack spectrograms, but there exist few photographs which are both sufficiently clear and sufficiently well-authenticated to be allowed as scientific data. Likewise, although any number of 'Uncorrelated Targets' (UCTs) and 'angels' have been observed on radar screens all over the world, the correlation of these with UFOs is relatively rare.

Many are quite simply explicable in terms of flocks of birds, radar mirages and the like. Nevertheless, a relatively small but impressive residue of reports remain in which both a visual object and a radar image were observed in such a manner as to make identification of one with the other a virtual certainty. Such cases as these offer the strongest chance of ascertaining the objective reality of UFOs and the validity of visual reports.

Here is a sample of these types of reports:

November 4, 1957. An object was seen approaching the Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, by two control tower operators. Through binoculars, the object was described as Booking like 'an automobile on end'. This object, while visually observable, was also noted on the airfield radar.

January 13, 1967. A Lear jet near Winslow, Arizona, reported seeing a red light that flashed on and off and quadrupled itself in a vertical direction. At the same time, the Albuquerque radar 'painted' one object whenever the light was on - none when it was off. This may be important cf. the following case:

Before 1971. An Air Force RB-47 was followed by a UFO for over

700 miles, from Mississippi to Oklahoma. Of special interest are several instances of simultaneous appearances and disappearances on three distinct 'channels', viz, visual observation, ground radar and electronic counter-measures (ECM) gear carried by the RB-47.

It may also be worth remarking at this stage that, according to Vallee, the object encountered by Barney and Betty Hill was also tracked on military radar.

What is to be said about these radar-visual cases?

Firstly, it may or may not be significant that most of them occur at night (this, as well be seen later, seems also to be a common feature of the various categories of close encounter cases). At present it would be premature to judge the importance of that observation.

Secondly, the fact that radar operators are necessarily involved in these sightings means that a high proportion of skilled people are making reports in this class. In fact, if the skill of the witness is any criterion for the worth of a class of reports (and I am not saying that it is, at least not exclusively) then the radar-visual class must be regarded as the strongest one from this point of view.

Thirdly, the very fact that in this class alone visual testimony is confirmed by instrumental evidence, strongly supports the contention that certain aspects at least of the UFO phenomenon are objective and possibly material (though not necessarily material as plasma balls and even mirages - radar reflections - can be registered on a radar screen).

In this regard it is interesting to note that most of the radar operators have compared the appearance of the objects on their

screens to a large aeroplane, although a radar operator in Alaska in 1975 said of one UFO observation (also confirmed visually) 'We saw characteristics that don't usually make sense on radar.' The visual observations of this particular UFO, like so many others, tell of the phenomenon simply vanishing not flying away in the manner expected of any normal sort of craft.

Another interesting case was one reported by the US Military in the mid-1960s concerning a slow, nocturnal UFO which was sighted visually and simultaneously tracked on radar. When first noted, the object glowed a brilliant red, and at this stage was observed on two radar screens, the missile-control radar and the search radar; each operating on a different frequency. However, during the observation the UFO changed colour to a glowing blue and was lost simultaneously to the missile-control radar, but not to the search radar. Shortly the colour reverted to red and the object was once more seen on both radars. This procedure was re-enacted several times in the course of fifteen minutes before a jet was sent aloft, at which point the UFO shot away at tremendous speed.

It would, of course, be premature to make any deep evaluation of the radar-visual UFO phenomenon at this stage. We certainly cannot say that these reports solve the mystery or, for that matter, even help a great deal towards the solution of the problem, except in so far as they add confirmation to the general conclusions drawn from physical trace and photographic cases, viz, that we are dealing with a phenomenon which is, at least partly, objective and physical.

In one sense, the presence of radar-visual cases adds as many problems as it solves. What, for instance, is the relation of this apparently physical thing tracked on radar screens to the heavily

psychological common to many reports of UFO encounters? Clearly, the biggest lesson to be learnt from reports of this class is that there is still very much more to be discovered, and a lot of work waiting to be done!

Class (d) - Close Encounter Cases

Close encounter cases form a large and interesting class of UFO reports. They are those in which the actual object, or stimulus of the report, is seen at such close proximity (usually within a few hundred metres, sometimes very much less) that misinterpretation of common phenomena is virtually ruled out.

Like the other classes under discussion, this is one of convenience and chance - chance in the sense that the observer need not (as far as we know) have been as close as he was when the UFO appeared; he could have been far away, observing it only as a distant object or nocturnal light. If he had been distant, he would, judging from the evidence, have reported a UFO conforming to one of the above-mentioned classes. In other words, we are dealing simply with a different class of reports the UFOs (i.e. the stimuli which generate these reports) do not appear to differ intrinsically from those which generate reports of any other class.

The interest in these cases stems from two main fields of possible investigation: that of determining the nature of the stimulus itself, and of ascertaining any interaction which the stimulus may have with the witness.

The first of these has been the traditional field of close encounter research, and has led to great emphasis on the scientific value of 'physical traces', i.e. any material or mark-ings which the UFO

leaves behind. The second line of research is more recent in origin, but it does seem to be gaining popularity, especially among those researchers who are turning from the 'nuts and bolts' conception of UFOs towards a broader view which includes the psychic aspects of the problem.

Close encounter reports may be subdivided further into three sub-classes, viz, type 1 close encounters (close encounters per se), type 2 close encounters (encounters in which some tangible physical effect is registered on the area where the UFO was reported, or on the witness himself) and type 3 close encounters (those in which 'creatures' of some kind are reported). We shall turn to each of these respectively.

Type 1 Close Encounters:

These are the simplest types of close encounter reports and consist of those in which the witnesses) simply report an object close at hand (within a few hundred metres - i.e. sufficiently close for the size and shape of the object to be determined) rather than something high in the sky. The content of the report does not essentially differ from those of distant UFOs, and the only real difference is the proximity of the stimulus in relation to the witness.

The nature of reports of this kind may best be judged by looking at a few examples and attempting to see if any kind of pattern emerges.

June 19, 1965. Two Oklahoma farm boys were stacking hay in the pre-sunrise hours when they were surprised by the sudden appearance, close by, of a brightly illuminated, circular, wingless

object. The boys remarked that the dogs started barking, apparently frightened by the object, and they were themselves very afraid and had trouble sleeping for several weeks thereafter.

January 11, 1966. A former nurse and three other passengers in a car reported seeing a luminous object looking somewhat like two saucers joined together with their rims projecting. The principal witness (the former nurse) maintained that the object was solid and not gaseous, as the outlines were at all times sharp and distinct, not nebulous as a gaseous body would be.

October 27, 1967. Independent witnesses reported an object which they described as looking like a large, glowing ball. This sighting took place around three o'clock in the morning outside a very small North Dakota town, and included among the witnesses a policeman who added that the object pursued a bobbing motion for a period of time and then shot up at tremendous speed, becoming lost to sight in about five seconds.

All descriptions of these objects seen close at hand (like reports of more distant objects, but even more acute) display a difficulty in comparing what was seen with some common object. Descriptions such as those above (two saucers, a luminous beach ball, a wingless craft and the like) are only approximations the witnesses themselves make this point quite clear - to something beyond the normal range of empirical experience.

The old problem of the physical nature of UFOs raises its hoary head again in relation to these reports. For instance, the policeman's observation in the last of our three sample cases the object shot away at very high speed, apparently without building up acceleration in the manner of a rocket, for example, and

apparently without any sonic boom effect.

Such observations as these are not particularly encouraging for the solid-UFO hypothesis and appear to be in conflict with the observations, such as those of the former nurse in the second of our examples, which strongly suggest the solid, physical nature of these objects. We cannot, however, discard any one set of observations, as both seem to be equally well-attested.

If necessary, we may well have to face up to another seeming paradox, viz, that UFOs display both the properties of solid objects and of immaterial phenomena, just as nuclear physicists have had to face the conclusion that electrons behave as both waves and particles and theologians have always been confronted with the problem of explaining how God can be both three and one.

It is interesting to note that sometimes the report of a nearby object indicates a far less substantial phenomenon than the above examples would seem to indicate. Thus there are cases on record where the reported UFO was transparent - the stars have even been observed through some UFOs! One report of a nearby UFO described the object as a transparent spherical entity in which could be seen two men 'pumping' a lever (this report was a type 3 close encounter, but the transparent nature of the object is the important feature for our present purpose).

What has been learned from these close encounters with unidentified flying objects is, in the main, not very great. As already mentioned, the perplexity of the witnesses is still apparent (in fact, even more apparent) when the UFO is seen close at hand - the mere factor of proximity certainly does not enable the witness to determine with any conviction just what it is that he is seeing.

Once again, also, we are faced with the same old ambiguities as to the physical nature of the sources of the stimuli. The only information which has apparently been established is that these objects are fairly small (rarely more than 20 metres), generally oval in shape and sometimes possessing a projection at the top which is often referred to as a dome. The objects also seem to be brilliantly luminous, or at least they are often observed to be brilliantly luminous, and therefore must be capable of illuminating themselves. This does not necessarily imply that they are essentially luminous or that they always and necessarily display this feature.

Another feature of these objects - a pattern discernible in this class of report - is the localised character of the UFO. Seldom are there great numbers of witnesses, and seldom do the reported UFOs drift far over land. The objects generally approach or (more usually observed) recede from the small region of their activity at high speed and high inclination. This could perhaps be expressed by saying that the activities of UFOs (as reported) are confined to a vertical domain rather than a horizontal one.

One vital question is left unanswered by an examination of type 1 close encounters alone. Do these reported objects, that leave no trace except in the minds of those who experience them, differ in any perceptible way from those objects reported in the other two classes of close encounters?

To attempt to answer this question, we must turn our attention to those other two classes of reports of close encounters with unidentified flying objects.

Type 2 Close Encounters:

Mention of type 2, or physical trace cases, immediately brings a pricking up of the ears among physical scientists, which of course is hardly surprising. These people are educated in analysing physical phenomena, and if the UFOs are sometimes accompanied by such physical phenomena, this appears to give the hard data required to place the phenomenon within the bounds of the physical sciences.

What are the various effects which have been reported? Firstly, there are large numbers of reports of ground markings, ranging from a pattern of indentations, apparently formed by the legs of a tripod-like structure, to the famous 'saucer nests' - round markings on the ground or in vegetation which at times show a distinct swirl pattern. Curiously, and possibly significantly, this swirl pattern is mostly in a counter-clockwise direction, irrespective of hemisphere. (Those UFOs, seen in the air for which a direction of swirl has been given also predominantly rotate in a counter-clockwise direction.)

Secondly, trees and plants are sometimes affected as if by considerable heat. Scorching and wilting of leaves are not uncommon symptoms of the effects of UFOs upon vegetable life.

Animal life is affected in a different way. The characteristic and constant reaction of animals is fear. In fact, the animals' panic (especially the wild barking of dogs) frequently draws their owners' attention to the UFO. At other times, however, equally spectacular close UFOs have apparently gone unnoticed by animals, although this seems to be a less frequent occurrence and I do not know of any animal reaction which was not fearful. It seems that when animals react at all (as they mostly do) their reaction is invariably one of fear.

The effects on humans are, however, more complicated, as is (I suppose) only to be expected. Fear is often reported, but it is difficult to say whether the fear induced inhuman beings has the same cause as that affecting animals (whatever this cause may be!) or whether it is the normal fear of being suddenly and unexpectedly confronted with the unknown.

On the other hand, some witnesses speak of experiencing a warm feeling towards the UFOs - a feeling that 'the thing is friendly'. This reported feeling could well be the psychological foundation for the widespread belief that the UFOs mean us no harm, but, on the contrary, they are here to perform some benevolent task for the benefit of mankind (this belief, of course, is related to the ETH and dogmatically assumes that the UFOs are really 'flying saucers' piloted by intelligent aliens). This human reaction makes an interesting contrast with the animal one, and would seem to suggest the working of a psychological rationalisation mechanism in man which masks the more basic animal reaction to the confrontation.

Even more peculiar are the psychological or subjective experiences of a rather uncommon variety which sometimes accompany close encounters with UFOs. Sometimes the witness will remark of a 'mysterious stillness' (which is probably, though not necessarily, subjective) or a feeling of decreased weight not infrequently giving the impression of levitation, although such levitation seems purely subjective. Readers conversant with the writings or religious mystics - such as St Teresa - will, no doubt, experience a sense of deja vu here - as will those who have made a study of the experiences obtained by using psychedelic chemicals.

The effects upon human beings are not, however, confined to the

psychological. Perhaps the most frequently reported physiological effect of a close approach to a UFO is the effect upon the eyes of the witness. Often the witness complains of soreness in the eyes, which become reddened and swollen. Temporary blindness has also been reported on at least one occasion.

Such effects as these strongly indicate the presence of considerable amounts of ultra-violet radiation, like that given off by an iron-welder's torch. Microwaves may also be responsible for some of these effects. The case in which temporary blindness was encountered - the Johnson's farm incident - was apparently one in which microwaves gave rise to the physiological effects as well as to certain properties of the soil within the ground markings allegedly left by the UFO.

On an entirely different level, we have reported effects which seem to take us once more into the shadow realm of the paranormal. These range from the 'mystical' feeling reported by witnesses of UFOs (not necessarily close encounter UFOs) to the dramatic and frightening effects investigated by Timothy Green Beckley and others; effects which frequently involved the apparent acquisition of telepathic and other psychic powers, and (on a more sombre note) lead to the gradual personality deterioration of the witness - sometimes to the point where he ceases to be able to live in harmony with either family or friends.

Possibly the most perplexing effect reported in conjunction with a close encounter UFO concerns not human or animal life, but vehicles. Case after case involves the stopping of a motor car, usually a stalling of the engine for the period during which the UFO is overhead.

This odd effect is usually termed electro-magnetic; however, there is no real evidence to suggest that this is the true explanation. No-one, to my knowledge, has performed detailed quantitative research on the field strength needed to cause the reported effects, but it is acknowledged by those who have applied some thought to the matter that the hypothetical field would need to be very considerable - certainly strong enough to noticeably affect the body of the car itself, if not to cause considerable damage. Yet no tell-tale results of magnetism have been found on cars allegedly stalled by UFOs.

Investigators from the Condon Committee, after thorough examination of a number of cars, failed to find evidence of exposure to powerful magnetic fields, even though a field strength far too weak to cause the reported engine malfunctions would have resulted in an easily detectable alteration of the magnetic properties of the body of these cars. This is not, of course, to cast doubts upon the validity of the reports - they are far too large in number and far too consistent for this to be easily done - but it is to cast serious doubts upon the validity of the usual explanation of the phenomenon. Something other than magnetism would seem to be at work here, especially considering the early occurrences of vehicle-stopping cases involving not mechanical automobiles, but horse-drawn carriages. Even if magnetism could stop cars, it is not easy to see it having a paralysing effect upon horses!

We shall now list a few reports which, though differing among themselves, give some general idea of the kinds of physical effects encountered when examining this class of UFO reports.

May 18, 1909. Caerphilly (Wales). Mr Lethbridge encountered a tube-like machine resting on the grass. Later it took off, leaving the

grass flattened on the site. Mr Lethbridge also reported men wearing furs and talking excitedly in a language he could not understand. This, strictly, puts this case in the type 3 category, although persistent ground markings justify its inclusion here.

September 1943. Oncativo (Argentina). Navarro Ocampo, driving between Rosario and Cordoba, saw a large, saucer-shaped object on the ground. It glowed with a bluish-green light, made a whistling sound and left, leaving a strange metal block on the spot.

August 11, 1948. Hamel (Minnesota). Two boys noticed a round, dull grey object 70cm in diameter and 30cm thick land near them like a balloon, but with a metallic noise. It spun, went up, hovered, manoeuvred to avoid telephone lines and trees, then flew away to the north-east. An FBI man found an area 70cm in diameter where the ground showed signs of extreme pressure.

April 18, 1960. Lacamp (Louisiana). Mr Arnold saw a round object, fiery red in colour, arriving at high speed from the south. It touched the ground about 300 metres away with a flame and loud explosion. It continued 'bouncing' in an easterly direction for about 300 metres before rising again, turning west and disappearing. The ground was scarred in nine places, and a substance resembling metallic paint found.

April 3, 1968. Cochrane (Wisconsin). A red, boomerang-shaped, luminous object flew low over two cars; the lights and engines of both cars failed while the object was overhead. The main witness described a feeling of great stillness and a temporary weightless sensation whilst the object was overhead, and complained of a burning sensation in the feet for some time thereafter.

Cases such as these (and there are hundreds), together with radar-visual and photographic reports, most tellingly indicate the presence of something physical, or apparently physical, associated with the UFO phenomenon. But why does this physical phenomenon manifest itself in some UFO reports and not in others? Even from the above short list, there does not appear to be any marked difference between those UFOs which show physical effects and those which do not, and this conclusion is reached after examination of large samples as well - there is simply no discernible difference between these two classes or types of UFO. Physical effect UFO reports do not differ from other reports of the epoch ('airships' in early years, 'saucers' in later) except that they betray their presence by a lasting effect. Why? We simply do not know.

Being confronted with something producing physical effects is unnerving for those of us who believe that we know all the general types of things which exist in our physical universe. Here we seem to have something which, whilst physical (or, at least, possessing physical properties), appears to lie outside our accepted limits of reality.

The shock of this, however, is as a mild curiosity when compared with the next type of close encounter cases, to which we shall now turn.

Type 3 Close Encounters:

Strange lights in the night sky seldom cause traumas now, unless they are especially bright or mysterious. After all, we of the space age have been made aware of all manner of luminous entities, both natural and man-made, above our heads, and the appearance of

strange lights wandering through the firmament has become such a common sight since the advent of the first artificial satellite that such observations no longer excite any wonder.

Even out daylight skies are so frequently crossed by the silver shapes of aircraft that a discoidal phantom floating in the heavens may not excite the wonder of a few decades ago. Only when things are seen at close range does the unknown really begin to get close, and yet even here the raw strangeness of the experience may be mitigated somewhat by the feeling that perhaps it is some rare type of phenomenon of inorganic nature.

The type of case to which we now come, however, presents a different order of magnitude and one which, frankly, many researchers shy away from altogether. The reports to which I refer of course are those in which living beings have been allegedly observed.

Here we seem to encounter a totally new dimension of the problem. On the face of it, we have living beings of a great variety of types, moving around within our environment quite 'at home' in the conditions of our world. Who are they? What are they? Astronauts from another planet? Creatures from a parallel universe? Or are they some peculiar type of psychological/psychic hallucination? These are questions on which we shall spend time later. For the moment, we simply raise them as possible explanations which have been put forward from time to time, in an effort to account for the reports of this baffling classification.

Before looking into this any more deeply, however, we shall list a sample of reports of this type in an effort to gain some idea of the range and magnitude of the problem now before us.

March 26, 1880. Lamy (New Mexico). Four men walking near Galisteo Junction sighted a strange balloon flying over them. Inside were eight to ten figures speaking in a language the witness could not understand.

April 14, 1897. Gas City (Indiana). An object landed on the farm of John Roush, terrifying the farmer and causing horses and cattle to stampede. Six occupants came out, made some repairs, boarded the object again and flew away to the east. (Note: The making of 'repairs' seems to be a frequent accompaniment of landings, both in the 'airship' and 'spaceship' eras.)

April 16, 1897. Springfield (Missouri). Mr W.H. Hopkins, a well-respected man who (according to all who knew him) was given to neither lies nor hallucinations, encountered a landed 'airship' and two beautiful occupants - a man and a woman of fine stature, both naked. The woman wore a band of jewels in her hair and was occupied picking flowers 'with exclamations of delight in a language I could not understand'. Mr Hopkins asked the couple where they came from and they pointed to the sky, saying something that sounded like 'Mars'. The occupants let Mr Hopkins examine their craft and made certain gestures concerning his clothes, watch and grey hair, indicating lack of awareness of time or ageing.

April 19, 1897. Leroy (Kansas). Alexander Hamilton observed a cigar-shaped object about 100 metres long, with a transparent cabin underneath, showing narrow reddish bands. It was illuminated and equipped with a searchlight and contained six 'hideous people' speaking in an unknown language. A cow was dragged away and found butchered in a field the following day (contrast this case with the previous one!).

April 23, 1897. McKinney Bayou (Arkansas). Judge Lawrence A. Byrne observed a peculiar object on the ground, manned by people who spoke a foreign language and looked like 'Japs'.

August 1914. Georgian Bay (Canada). William J. Kiel and seven other persons saw a spherical craft on the surface of the water. On the deck were two small men wearing green-purple clothes and, on the opposite side, another three men dressed in light brown and wearing square masks down to their shoulders. Seeing the witnesses they entered the craft, except for one dwarf, wearing shoes with curved, pointed tips, who remained outside while the craft rose three metres above the water and shot upwards.

October 7, 1954. Hennezis (France). The two children of the Lanssellin family witnessed the landing of a luminous, red object shaped like a half-egg, and saw two occupants who looked like normal men.

One could extend this list for many pages, but the above is, I believe, sufficient to set the problem. Other examples could be cited, including more dwarfs, normal and near normal men who speak the language of the witness, huge, hairy monsters, angle-faced 'Venusians' with long golden hair, headless, bat-winged monsters, frog-men, humanoids with claws instead of hands, transparent entities which materialise and de-materialise inside rooms, etc., etc., etc. In other words, the variety of occupants is equally as great as that of the craft - although one type of craft does not seem to be preferred by one type of occupant, several types of occupant sometimes even sharing a single craft!

Let us now consider a report of a totally different kind.

Late August 1975. Seattle (Washington). A young lady awoke around 2 am to discover that she was totally paralysed and unable to utter a single sound. Her window was open, and suddenly a tiny-football-sized object of a dull grey colour floated in through it and hovered over the carpet near the foot of her bed. As she watched, three tiny tripod legs extended and the object settled on to the floor. Once landed, a miniature ramp extended from the object to the floor and five or six tiny beings clad in tight fitting black clothes climbed down the ramp, made some repairs to the object, climbed back inside again, withdrew the ramp and took off in the object. As soon as the object sailed out of the window, the woman was again able to move and speak. She is quite convinced that the whole episode really took place and was not a dream.

Lest the reader be tempted to dismiss this last report as a singular 'crackpot' story, it must be mentioned here that such experiences are by no means unknown and may be relatively frequent, although, by its very nature, the percentage of experiences of this kind which are actually reported may well be quite small. It should also be noted that certain similarities exist between the above report and the more 'conventional' type 3 cases; for instance, the shape of the craft, the ramp, the dress of the occupants and the 'making of repairs' so often reported in these occupant cases.

The overall importance of these mini-UFOs to the problem of interpretation of type 3 reports (and, for that matter, all UFO accounts) can hardly be underestimated. If these cases can be given the same validity rating as the more conventional ones (and, even at this stage of research, it seems as though they can - there are, for instance, multiple witness cases among some of the relatively few mini-UFO cases which have so far come to light) they must, quite obviously, be taken equally as seriously, despite

their seeming absurdity.

Yet, what is absurdity - how are we to judge, and by what standard are we to judge, which reports are absurd and which ones are not?

Usually we find that judgments of absurdity reflect, in a rather simple-minded fashion, the beliefs of the person making the judgment. Thus, someone who maintains that all UFOs are mirages will reject out of hand as being absurd any report of a landing, or physical traces, or, especially, occupants. Similarly, someone who takes the extraterrestrial view will accept landings and even occupant cases, though he will surely baulk at such absurd reports as the above.

However, if we have no theory, no idea of what the phenomenon really is (or if we accept the paraphysical view, on which just about everything is acceptable), we have no reason to call one report absurd while another is accepted. For all we know, the mini-UFO reports may seem less absurd than the others, once the solution to the UFO problem is discovered.

The reticence felt towards mini-UFO reports is, however, only a shadow of the horror with which contactee cases are traditionally held by scientific Ufologists. For the majority of extraterrestrial believers who maintain a more or less scientific approach to the subject, contact cases are considered an anathema, as they (like the mini-UFO cases) appear to parody the extraterrestrial hypothesis. Thus, while it may be permissible to believe in spaceships with occupants visiting our planet, it is certainly not reasonable, say the scientific ETH believers, to actually contact such beings - especially if such contact involves the employment of extrasensory perception and results in messages of spiritual, rather than

technological, content!

Later we shall discuss the religious movements which have grown up around the contactee experience, but, for the moment, we are primarily interested in this form of experience itself and its similarity with the more 'traditional' type 3 close encounter cases.

It has been customary to sunder these two types of reports completely, maintaining scientific interest in non-contact 'creature' reports while relegating all contactee reports to the 'crackpot' or 'liar' categories. However, as we suggested with the mini-UFO cases, such a dogmatic pigeon-holing of reports reflects the prejudice of the researcher rather than the quality of the report.

Before contactee reports can be correctly assessed in relation to other type 3 close encounter reports (and, ipso facto, in relation to all other UFO reports) the similarities and differences will need to be appreciated. Are there, for instance, any transitional or 'bridge' cases lying between contactee and true type 3 cases?

The answer would seem to be in the affirmative - in fact there appear to be several types of 'bridge' cases.

One feature of the occupants reported in contactee cases, which is often assumed to differentiate them from occupants reported in type 3 cases, is the long hair of the former and the conspicuous lack of this feature in the latter. However, while this distinction holds for the majority of cases, it is noteworthy that long-haired, small men (a combination of the typical type 3 case 'dwarf reported and the long-haired men of contactee fame?) were reported in the Miguel Espanal case of October 10, 1957. Likewise, tall men with long hair (an even closer approach to the contactee category) were

reported in the Guimaraes case of July 1957 and again in the El Chaco case of 1963, whereas medium-sized men with long hair were reported in the Porto Alegre case of November 10, 1954 and in the Costa e Rosa case of December 9, 1954.

Although none of the above cases involved contact, the entity reported in the last-mentioned case was almost identical to the alleged 'Venusian' of that arch-contactee, George Adamski. However, the witness in the Costa e Rosa case was hardly likely to have been an Adamski fan - he was an illiterate peasant who had never heard of UFOs - let alone contactees!

A second type of 'bridge' case is represented by those reports which involve a single, isolated contact including some form of message. An example of such a case would be the Siragusa case (Italy, April 30, 1962) in which two 'men' of normal height gave a 'peace message' (in Italian) before leaving in a brilliant UFO. Such reports are not uncommon; they remind us of the angelic messages of yesteryear and seem to provide a half-way house, as it were, between type 3 reports involving no real contact and the fully-fledged contactee cases.

Yet another type of 'bridge' is provided by cases such as the Barney and Betty Hill incident, or by those cases where the witness experiences a sense of compulsion to approach a UFO or to go out of doors when a UFO happens to be overhead, or, again, where the witness observes entities materialising inside a closed room while a UFO floats overhead. These are not typical type 3 cases - but neither are they typical contactee cases, although such events as these often start a witness on his way towards contacteeism. (This point should also be remembered in any assessment of the relationship between contactee cases and other varieties of UFO

reports.)

Noted researcher Jacques Vallee referred to type 3 cases as 'festivals of absurdity' - perhaps we can best say that the more absurd the festival becomes, the closer is the true contactee experience approached!

Another and somewhat different type of 'bridge' may be mentioned also, concerning not primarily the intrinsic features of the case itself (as in the above examples), but rather the reactions of the witness. The type of case I have in mind is an incident which does not involve contact, but which so interests the witness that he later returns to the scene of the crime, so to speak, and there experiences something which involves, or leads to, contact.

There are cases (and they are not rare!) of a person witnessing a number of 'conventional' UFOs over a period of time until a contactee experience eventually occurs. This tendency, or apparent tendency, for the UFO phenomenon to zero in on one person, a group of people, or a particular community, is one of the stranger aspects of the problem and seems to me to be directly relevant to our understanding of the phenomenon of contacteeism as well as to the UFO problem in general.

The case of the notorious Aladino Felix is an interesting one when viewed in this context. Felix saw his first UFO in the company of another man - a rather typical multi-witness case involving the observation of a number of unidentified flying objects hovering in the sky. The sighting occurred during a period of considerable UFO activity, and it would probably today be filed away in some obscure cabinet - if, indeed, it ever reached the report stage - except for one thing. Felix returned to the spot where he had

observed the UFOs, and this time found a landed 'saucer' complete with friendly occupant. Thus began his contactee experience, which ended in tragedy and crime.

We have, I think, said enough about contactee experiences for the moment. We shall return to the question in a later chapter, when the controversial subject of contacteeism, or the religious aspect of the UFO phenomenon and contactee experiences in particular, is discussed.

The above discussion does, I hope, show that despite the controversy and religiosity which has developed around this aspect of the UFO phenomenon, the contactee experiences themselves form a continuum with the rest of the reported UFO cases and that, therefore, there would seem good reason for believing that such experiences are as much an integral part of the entire phenomenon as the more 'conventional' cases.

~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~

3 - Are There Patterns in Time?

Many investigators of the UFO phenomenon feel instinctively that if some temporal pattern can be found among the mass of data regarding UFO sightings which has now been accumulated, the solution to the mystery will be considerably closer to fruition. If a definite temporal pattern can be found, they argue, the next step to be taken by the researcher will be to determine whether the newly found pattern corresponds to some already recognised cycle in nature.

If such a correspondence does emerge, it will be, hopefully, only a matter of time before a causal connection was established, or some factor uncovered which may act as a mutual cause, giving rise to both the UFO cycle and the other natural cycle to which it corresponds.

For instance, a correlation between UFO active years and oppositions of the planet Mars has been suspected from time to time by some researchers. If this could be established, it would certainly aid the prediction of times when UFOs were more likely to be observed. However, it would potentially imply much more than this. It would, in fact, open the possibility of finding the solution to the riddle.

Undoubtedly, if a correspondence with the Martian period could be found, two possible explanations for such correlation, and for the entire UFO phenomenon, would be put forward by two opposing camps of UFO researchers.

First, there would be the sensational Extraterrestrial Intelligence

Hypothesis, or ETI, the supporters of which would undoubtedly take this opportunity to correlate the UFO phenomenon with the geocentric distance of another planet as being proof positive that the UFOs are, in fact, some form of alien space vehicle originating upon the planet in question.

Of course, the space probes of the USA and USSR make the simple form of this explanation now seem uncomfortably unlikely. However, the enterprising ETI theorist can still overcome this difficulty by either postulating the existence of totally alien indigenous life on the planet in question (Mars, in this instance), or else take the more reasonable path of assuming that the UFOs are not the work of indigenous Martian life, but rather the artefacts of explorers from another solar system who, having chosen Mars as a base (a wise choice it would be too, being of low escape velocity, thin atmosphere and relatively temperate climate, and being in close proximity to the one planet in the Solar System on which advanced life-forms flourish), proceed to explore the planetary system, especially our own dear Earth.

At times of Martian opposition, the distance between the two planets would be at a minimum. However, it is not really clear why this should be of such advantage to a race of beings who have come from who knows how many light years away to establish a Martian base. Surely such a race would not put off planetary explorations for years until Mars and Earth were in such a position that a few measly millions of kilometres would be saved?

On the other hand, those researchers who would love to find a psychological explanation for the entire phenomenon could be expected to take up the misperception banner. Mars, especially at times of perihelial opposition, is a brilliant and conspicuous object,

rising as the sun sets. Good oppositions are sufficiently rare to make the appearance of a brilliant Mars a rather uncommon sight and therefore, one could argue, it is not surprising that many people (especially those whose eyes are slightly myopic) would mistake this brilliant red ball for something other than a planet.

Furthermore, once a few such misidentifications had been circulated around as 'UFO sightings', a general rumour would not be long in gaining momentum, to the effect that there is a big saucer scare in progress which 'the Authorities' (that nebulous but terribly maligned group) are trying to cover up as sightings of Mars. Given this sort of rumour, UFO sightings would start coming from overheated minds all over the country, some being Mars and others being just about anything that was luminous and in the sky!

Thus correlation does not offer evidence uniquely supporting one theory, a point which may be even better exemplified by considering the various interpretations of another possible correlation suspected by some researchers (and strongly denied by others).

The correlation to which I am referring is, inevitably, between UFOs and the sunspot cycle (I say 'inevitably' because practically everything which happens within the Solar System and shows any likelihood of displaying periodicity is sooner or later linked with the sunspot cycle).

Now, if it should be found that UFOs are more prevalent during tunes of maximum sunspot activity, I dare speculate that it would not be long before someone would put forward the theory that they are somehow related to the aurora, and consist of luminous

discharges in the atmosphere. Again, I will also speculate that a researcher of different persuasion would use exactly the same data in support of the idea that UFOs are alien spacecraft which use (in some unspecified manner) the solar winds as fuel and, of course, with the powerful solar winds blowing out of sunspots, what better time for travelling than when sunspots are at their height?

On the other hand, if it should be discovered that UFOs are being seen in greater numbers during times of minimum sunspot activity, I would not be surprised to find someone putting forward the theory that they represent some luminous atmospheric effect which is destroyed at times of high solar particle bombardment, but can become active during the quieter times, and, of course, an ETI enthusiast could easily point out that UFOs avoid high sunspot activity because of the increased radiation then prevailing.

All these suggestions, on the face of it, look plausible if only a relatively small sample of UFO reports are examined. However, it does not need a very astute mind, nor does it need much knowledge of some of the more spectacular UFO reports, to seriously question how an atmospheric phenomenon could appear as a silvery module disgorging humanoid occupants.

Nor is it any more readily apparent why an interstellar ship should be made so dependent upon the radiation of the solar wind as a fuel source. Neither is it apparent why a space ship which, having journeyed at tremendous speeds through interstellar space should visit Earth only at times of minimum sunspot activity.

At speeds approaching that of light (which such a ship must have reached in interstellar space) a vehicle would plough through the stray hydrogen atoms of interstellar space at such a speed that the

entire ship would be exposed to almost unimaginably horrific blasts of radiation. If the technology of the ship's designers was sufficiently advanced to overcome this, a little bit of solar wind would cause them no loss of sleep.

Nevertheless, much ufological speculation has been, in the past, on that rather low level and, as I hope to have demonstrated in the above dubious exercise, such speculation as this can be used by its supporters to fit any temporal pattern which may emerge from the data, while similarly, any temporal pattern may be used to support the main theme of the speculative hypothesis.

Regarding the alleged correlations themselves, it is unfortunate that they are for the most part based on data gathered over a relatively short time span, and also that the data itself is sufficiently unusual to warrant inclusion in UFO lists.

These two points are important. If there is some long term periodicity in the UFO phenomenon, the relatively short time over which reports have been regularly documented is hardly sufficient to allow it to betray itself. For the same reason, any apparent trend or pattern which seems to be part of a cycle having a period nearly equal to the length of time over which our data extends, may or may not be real - only a much longer time span will enable us to see if the suspected pattern really repeats itself.

Secondly, we cannot be certain that all phenomena representative of the UFO problem reach our lists. Perhaps we are merely skimming the most spectacular events off the top of a host of others, which pass, for the most part, unreported or even unnoticed. For instance, someone is much more likely to report a brilliant light in the sky than he is to report a strange luminous

insect in his back garden, and yet our data may be lacking to just the extent that reports of odd insects may just be sufficient to establish some pattern.

Beyond such criticisms there lies, however, the more serious possibility that the alleged cycles themselves are based rather more upon the hopes of the researcher than upon any apparent correlation. If one tries sufficiently hard, it is possible to fit some sort of pattern to just about any collection of data. Thus, if a number of Mars-Earth positions are taken, and a number of UFOs are reported over the same period, it should be possible to find patterns running through both in apparent correspondence with one another.

Whether these patterns are real (in the sense of having an actual, causal relationship or both being effects of a single, hidden cause) is the question at issue, as is the further question of whether such a correspondence (even if real) throws any light on the essential issue, or whether it is simply the result of something temporary.

A good example of this latter point was displayed in the UFO reports in South Australia in 1972. During that year, UFO Research South Australia (now UFO Research South Australia Incorporated) investigated a total of ten low-level sightings, and found that nine of the ten occurred during the period between last quarter and new moon. Furthermore, the one which did not conform was the weakest of the ten sightings, in the sense that it was the one which seemed most likely to be explicable in terms of known phenomena, according to Investigations Officer, Mr Keith Basterfield.

This would seem to be the clearest possible instance of a temporal

pattern. However, that pattern has not been repeated since in South Australia, nor is there evidence to suggest that it regularly occurs elsewhere. Therefore, whilst admitting the interesting pattern, we must be careful not to extend this beyond South Australian UFOs in 1972 to the general global population of UFOs. In other words, it seems to have been a temporary and local pattern and does not (at least by itself) shed new light on the total problem.

The alleged Martian correlation, claimed by a number of researchers to have been apparent during the 1950s, may have been of like character. There was a favourable opposition of Mars in the UFO flap year of 1954, but there were no such oppositions in 1957 or 1947. Admittedly, there was a very favourable opposition in 1956, but the opposition of 1948 was very poor (in fact, it was about the most unfavourable position possible, in respect of the Mars-Earth distance at opposition). The very favourable Martian opposition of 1973 was heralded by a significant UFO flap in the USA, but nothing very spectacular appears to have happened to coincide with the following (1975) Martian opposition.

Similarly, the sunspot correlation does not appear to be at all straightforward. For instance, the years 1947 and 1957 were both periods of sunspot maximum as well as being monumental UFO years. However, the year 1954 was also a UFO flap year of monumental proportions but this time the sun was quiet, being at the minimum of the sunspot cycle. Similarly, the important flap year of 1973 was not a notable sunspot year, being neither at the maximum nor the minimum of the solar cycle.

It is doubtful, therefore, if a correlation between UFO reports and years of solar activity looks any more promising than a correlation

with the oppositions of Mars. This is rather disappointing in a way, as increased UFO activity in years of solar maximum may have provided a clue to the solution of the mystery. At least, it would certainly have given a boost to those who maintain some connection between UFOs and atmospheric electricity.

The question of whether there is a connection between UFO reports in any particular year and the solar activity for that year (as has been claimed by Mr Stan Seers of Queensland) is a different problem. However, the fact that some years of low solar activity produce many UFOs while others do not indicates that solar activity alone is not the cause.

If it should be demonstrated that UFOs are reported more frequently on days of peak sunspot numbers (whether in times of maximum or minimum phases of the sunspot cycle), the problem would then be to show why UFOs should respond to a low level peak at the minimum of the cycle, whilst still falling off during a low at the cycle's peak. In other words, why they should respond to the phase of the short-term fluctuations rather than to the intensity of solar activity (or, if you like, to the relative rather than the absolute degree of solar activity). More research will need to be done on this problem in the near future.

In addition to such moderately long period cycles as those discussed above, some researchers believe that much shorter-term patterns or cycle are also revealed, notably cycles covering the yearly period and others covering times of the month and even days of the week.

With regard to these last two alleged patterns, it should be remarked that any collection of data will always tend to give the

appearance of having patterns running through it, but in the majority of instances these patterns will be more apparent than real. Thus too much should not be made of the '24th of the month phenomenon' (the alleged tendency for UFO reports and UFO-related events to occur on this date) as the evidence for it is based on a very small selection of data and is probably coincidental.

Neither should the 'Wednesday phenomenon' be taken as the last word in ufology. Certainly, it is true that a number of independent sets of data do suggest a peak of UFO activity occurring on Wednesday evenings. However, other sets of data show different weekly peaks - including peaks occurring over the weekends which almost certainly reflect social patterns of witnesses rather than something intrinsic in the phenomenon itself.

Indeed, it is quite possible that such a pattern of social behaviour might be responsible for the Wednesday peak in those sets of data which display such a phenomenon. Is it not possible that many people like to take a mid-week break and have a night out? Is there not also a tendency for meetings and the like to be held on Wednesday evenings, and, of course, may not the Wednesday afternoon holiday of many firms make people feel more refreshed and more ready to have a night away from the house?

Turning to the more important annual patterns, it is widely held that the months from June or July to about September produce more UFOs (or, at least, more UFO sightings) than other months, although many investigators also point to a minor peak in late March and early April, and a few minor peaks in January and November-early December. February, on the other hand, is traditionally the low month of the year.

The above pattern, though supported by most lists of UFO statistics, is not reflected by all the statistics. Lists of sightings vary, and in some I have seen, February and other traditionally 'low' months are well represented by sightings. Thus we must, even here, remain uncommitted as to the regularity (possibility even of the reality) of this annual pattern.

However, we will for the moment assume that the pattern is a real one, at least in so far as the middle months of the year tend to produce more UFO sightings than the late or early months, and speculate as to what the cause of this phenomenon may be.

At first sight a rather 'obvious' suggestion presents itself - a suggestion which has not gone past many a sceptic - viz, that the middle months of the year are also the summer months of the northern hemisphere. This could be termed the 'silly season' hypothesis, and seems to suggest (in the minds of many) a psychological explanation for the UFO. It has, indeed, been used to support just such a hypothesis.

Such a simple hypothesis does not, however, stand up to the further investigations of Ion Hobana and Julien Weverbergh, who, in their work UFOs Behind the Iron Curtain, produced two very interesting graphs of the numbers of sightings throughout the year. The first graph was of Rumanian sightings during the period of 1968-9 and showed a low in February, a small peak in March, steady activity from April to June and a sharp rise during the second half of June, a high peak in late July-early August, followed by a decline, initially sharp in late August but steadying off by September.

This could well fit the 'silly season' hypothesis, but the second

graph could not - it was of southern hemisphere sightings during the year 1965 (according to Vuillequez) and, surprisingly, it corresponded almost exactly to the first graph. The February low, the minor March peak and the very pronounced mid-year high were all represented exactly as in the first graph.

Moreover, Hobana and Weverbergh also point out that this pattern was not only apparent in reports of UFOs, but was also apparent in reports of supposed UFOs which later came to be identified as familiar objects.

This last point, taken in conjunction with the similarity of the graphs, is an important one and may well give us a clue to the cause of this annual pattern.

Thus we find that UFOs are seen more easily in the northern summer and in the southern winter, and we find that this applies not only to real UFOs (those which remain unidentified), but also to those familiar objects which are mistaken for UFOs. This strongly suggests that the pattern is one of observation rather than of apparition and, consequently, the cause is to be found not in some intrinsic property of the UFO, but in some property of the conditions under which UFOs and identified objects are visible. Such a condition must be more operative in the northern summer and in the southern winter.

The cause of the phenomenon is, I suggest, to be found in the climatic differences between the two hemispheres of our planet. Even a very quick glance at a globe will show that while the northern hemisphere is mostly land, the southern is mainly water, and this fact has far-reaching effects upon the climate of the respective hemispheres. The northern winter is, for most people,

bleak and cold, whereas the winter of corresponding southern latitudes is, because of the modifying effect of large oceanic expanses, much milder. On the other hand, the northern summers in many places are dry thanks to the continental air masses, while summer for many places in the southern hemisphere means cloud, excessive humidity and high temperatures.

Thus is it not more reasonable to expect northern peoples to have a greater chance of seeing a UFO in their summer than in the cold bleakness of their winter, and is it not equally plausible that southern UFOs are more likely to be seen under the clear skies of a dry winter than in the humid mists of a maritime summer? I am not, of course, suggesting that such a simplistic view of terrestrial climatic regions is satisfactory.

Obviously, both maritime and continental climates occur in both hemispheres, but I am suggesting that a greater percentage of southern hemisphere dwellers live under, conditions which favour winter UFO sightings than do their northern hemisphere counterparts. Conversely, a greater percentage of northern hemisphere dwellers live in conditions that favour summer UFO sightings than do their southern counterparts, and I further suggest that this effect may be sufficient to account for the apparently enhanced UFO activity during the middle months of the year. At least, such an explanation should be carefully considered before any more exotic suggestion is put forward.

Regarding the above-mentioned tendency for sightings of both unidentifieds and identifieds to rise and fall in unison, I should mention that this effect was also noted by Mr Col Phillips of the Queensland UFO Research Bureau. Mr Phillips commented that the effect is noticeable in the usual waves of UFO reports known

to all investigators of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, another Queensland investigator, Mr Noel Barren, plotted these waves of reports against time and found a correspondence with the lunar phases (he used Queensland reports only and did not suggest that such a pattern of reports is characteristic of UFOs in general) as well as a secondary pattern which seemed to indicate cycles of around six or seven days. Mr Frank Gillespee of South Australia noted that the six-day cycle corresponded well with the frequency of frontal weather patterns, and suggested that the secondary pattern may be the result of fluctuating observability due to cloud conditions, whereas the lunar cycle may reflect the effect of moonlight on observations.

Such conclusions are in accord with my suggestion regarding climatic and general meteorological conditions in determining patterns of observation, rather than the presence of intrinsic cycles of apparition.

The reader may, by now, be starting to feel that this is pretty much a negative approach to the question of temporal patterns. Indeed, it does look quite probable that many of the time patterns which have become a part of UFO lore do not, in actual fact, reflect any real property of the phenomenon itself. Nevertheless, it certainly would be unwise to jump to any conclusions - if the presence of temporal patterns has not been proven, it is assuredly true that their absence has not been proven either. In fact, on balance, there still seems to be more evidence in favour of temporal patterns of some sort than there is for a completely unstructured, constant stream of UFO reports.

This is probably more apparent in localised flap areas, or at least in

some of these (as there exist UFO 'hot' areas which seem to produce constant activity or bursts of activity which are totally unstructured and sporadic). It has been suggested that waves of activity in these areas follow some kind of fluctuation in the Earth's local magnetic field, and that the flap areas themselves show an anomaly in the terrestrial magnetic field.

This suggestion, if it could be proven beyond reasonable doubt, would certainly be a breakthrough in ufological research. At least one investigator (Mr Bill Chalker of NSW) is working on the determination of cyclical patterns of certain flap areas in Australia, with the hope of being able to predict the occurrence of UFO flaps with sufficient accuracy to allow observers and instruments to be in the area at the right time.

If successful, this approach would bring ufology into the mainstream of scientific research, taking the evidence for and study of the phenomenon away from the investigation of reports by random witnesses, and into the field of direct experimentation, at least as controlled as that of the sciences of natural history and astronomy.

It is also possible that world-wide (or extensive) waves of UFO sightings may be explicable in terms of several flap areas coincidentally becoming active at the same time, quite independently of one another. This would be analogous to a floor covered with mousetraps which all had faulty catches and would fire without being touched. If we could imagine these traps firing at random (and then being mysteriously re-set) for a lengthy period of time, it is not hard to imagine that, at certain moments during this time span, several of the traps would fire simultaneously or almost simultaneously.

I dare say that if the number of traps firing was graphed against time, the resulting line would reveal definite peaks and troughs, apparently reminiscent of some pattern, but actually a random occurrence.

The consideration of the phenomenon of randomness (the so-called random walk) is always a headache for those searching for patterns in data. A similar situation exists in the plotting of long-term variations in the periods of certain types of variable stars. Plotted over a century or more, these stars show, superimposed upon the short period fluctuations, general trends which look as though they should be obedient to some long-range, causally determined pattern, but which, according to one particular line of thinking, are only the results of cumulative random effects in the lengths of the short period fluctuations.

Perhaps many of the apparent temporal patterns allegedly found in UFO data are nothing more than results of the random phenomena. Researchers with a taste for mathematics and statistical theory may like to try their hand at this one.

Before leaving the problem of temporal patterns, mention should be made of the process through time of the usual UFO flap. Frequently, a flap seems to build up over a period of one or two months, reach a peak which is rarely more than one month in duration, and then take another month or two to subside. Whilst this may not happen in every case of a flap (we would have to analyse every flap to be sure of this), the tendency seems constant enough to be classed as a temporal pattern, though a different sort of temporal pattern to those we have been considering previously.

What this pattern means it is too early to tell, but it may be a real

and vital one and should be looked for as carefully as patterns of changing fluctuations over time, by all those investigating the problem of UFO flaps.

~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~

4 - Are There Patterns in Space?

As well as patterns in time, UFOs are traditionally supposed to reveal behaviour patterns with regard to geographical locations. Once again, however, the data in support of this assertion is not always of sufficient standard to allow unambiguous interpretation. Also, it appears to be highly probable that the beliefs of individual investigators have, from time to time, seeped in to colour both data collected and, of course, interpretation of this data.

For instance, older books in particular indicate that the majority of sightings are made around such constructions as atomic power plants, hydro-electric schemes, military installations, rocket bases, etc. I have seen people become quite concerned over the sighting of an alleged UFO which from the angle of the witness's sight appeared to be over a major power station, and I'm sure that many of the spatial pattern theories have arisen from such reports, although this does not a priori necessitate their falsity.

Then, of course, we hear of patterns which seem to suggest interest in terrestrial military activity, or of engineering development, or the apparent 'secret build-up' of UFOs in areas of low population density. We even have suggestions of systematic UFO surveillance of various aspects of our engineering (say, power stations during one flap, atomic proving grounds during the next, etc.), but perhaps the most imaginative suggestion I have personally heard involved the apparent liking of UFOs for bodies of inland water. They concentrate around such areas, this suggestion hypothesises in all seriousness (?), to allow the crewmen of the spaceships to answer the calls of nature. We are being helped to pollute out environment, it would seem!

Before any pattern can be seriously discussed, however, we must first be able to ascertain exactly what is being plotted.

Are the positions of UFOs, or of witnesses to UFO events, being examined for evidence of pattern?

For instance, take our witness who claimed to see a UFO over a power station (and hinted that it was up to no good -spying, I presume). In this particular case, the power station in question was at least ten kilometres from the witness, in a north-westerly direction. The UFO concerned (a silver daylight disc) appeared very high in the sky and was of considerable size as estimated by the witness, although absence of cloud must make judgment regarding height - and therefore size somewhat doubtful. It could have been much smaller and at a much lower altitude.

The point at issue here is whether the UFO was really over the power station or whether it only appeared to be. It could have been many miles either side of the station, especially if the witness grossly overestimated (or underestimated, for that matter) its size.

Such considerations as these become especially important in the plotting of so-called flight paths of UFOs or in the investigation of the alleged tendency for UFOs to travel on straight paths. If a UFO is observed from only one locality, or from two closely adjacent localities, there is little hope of finding the exact position of the object itself (unless, of course, it is very close and actually observed in front of some objects - e.g. mountains or trees whose distance is known). Widely separated witnesses and accurate positioning (a luxury with which UFO researchers are seldom, if ever, blessed) are needed for this.

As anyone who has had experience in interviewing witnesses of meteors knows well, people have a notorious tendency to underestimate distances, Many meteor witnesses will speak about the object 'falling in the next paddock' or 'burning out just as it was about to strike the hillside', when in actual fact it may have burnt out many kilometres above the ground (the light effect of a meteorite's fall always - except in the case of a giant meteorite - vanishes long before the object reaches ground level) or appeared hundreds of kilometres away. Only triangulation using widely separated witnesses can determine the true distance, altitude and path of the meteor.

Likewise, the social aspect of UFO sightings should not be overlooked, as it is possible that this contributes to some apparent concentration of UFO sightings, just as we suggested it may contribute to apparent temporal clusters of UFO reports. Thus, a region apt to experience long spells of dry clear weather and clear nights coupled with relatively high temperatures may be expected to be inhabited by outdoor-loving people. If such an area should be a UFO hot spot, the climate and climate-induced social habits of its inhabitants should be seriously considered as a major cause. Could this be responsible, at least in part, for the frequency of reports in California?

Closely related to the above may be the alertness of personnel in and near military establishments. These people, trained as they are to be on the watch for anything unusual and to report anything seen, may well be expected to report UFOs, and therefore concentrations of sightings from military establishments may not be as sinister as some people would like us to believe.

The same could also be said for rocket and balloon launches

(observers looking up into the sky may see a UFO in addition to the balloon or rocket). These are sometimes claimed to be of interest to UFOs.

Then again, randomness could play its part in giving the illusion of UFO hot areas purely by coincidental non-causal, clustering. I am not suggesting that this effect actually is an important one, but it certainly should not be disregarded either in specific or in general cases, and must be remembered before more exotic explanations are considered.

Nevertheless, the idea that UFOs are somehow clustered in geographical location or follow certain well-established flight paths is one which has sunk deep into the thoughts of ufologists and is widely taken as a near certainty. One could say 'Where there's smoke, there must be fire,' but in UFO research there is often plenty of smoke, enough to blear one's sight, but the fire is usually hard to find.

One especially thick cloud which has effectively proved to be a smoke-screen to many researchers is the grid system made popular by Captain B. Cathie. Cathie sees this as an extension of the 'Straight Lines' (or 'Law of Orthontency' to give it its technical name) allegedly discovered by French UFO researcher and statistician, Aime Michel.

Basically, Michel believes that if the positions of UFO sightings are plotted on a map, they have a pronounced tendency to fall along straight lines extending for many miles across the countryside. The suggestion is implied that these lines are preferred flight tracks of the UFOs, and it is usually assumed that they have been favoured by these flying objects since time immemorial - hence a whole sub-

species of ufology in which re-searchers attempt to associate UFO paths with the alleged 'Leys' which certain psychic visionaries claim to have perceived connecting ancient sacred sites.

To go into the subject of Leys would be beyond the scope of this present book, but let it suffice to say that straight lines can be drawn through any collection of points, be they ancient sacred sites, places of UFO sightings or what have you (try it yourself; flick ink on to a sheet of paper and see how may straight line patterns you can derive from the random scatter of ink dots).

It is not surprising that some people (whether 'psychic' or not) can get 'flashes' during which they see alignments between sacred sites, either on maps or in the field. After all, the history of the Martian 'canals' consists mainly of trained observers seeing spurious linear connections between random Martian features.

Neither is it greatly surprising if some of these alleged Leys appear to correspond with the alleged flight paths of UFOs. In fact, with all the infinite possibilities of linear connections between both sets of random points, it would be something of a mystery if there was not some correspondence!

Then again, the problem of what is being plotted - UFO or UFO sighting - is met head on. Are the alleged straight lines connecting witnesses or objects? Surely the answer must be 'witnesses' (for reasons explained earlier in this chapter) and, once this admission is made, it becomes pointless to speak about the line as a 'UFO flight path'. Was the UFO hundreds of metres or hundreds of kilometres from the witness (and hence, from the line)? We simply do not know. Even a little thought on the matter reveals the unsteady nature of Cathie's foundations. Unfortunately, the

building he puts on these foundations is even shakier.

Thus, much reliance is placed upon the discovery of a mysterious 'aerial' in the southern ocean, photographed during the course of a routine oceanic survey. Cathie uses this object as a point of origin for his complicated grid; a grid which connects points all over the surface of our planet.

The 'aerial' is approximately cruciform in shape, with both its sets of arms indicating the main axes of the grid. Characteristically, most UFO sightings are found to fall either along the lines formed by extending these arms, or they can be shown to relate to such lines by a mathematical process, which appears forced to say the least.

In addition to the general criticisms we have already raised with regard to plots of UFO sightings, there are a number of serious new difficulties here. For instance, are the plottings of sufficient accuracy to satisfy the construction of a world-wide grid? Is the object upon which this whole grid system depends really an aerial planted by whatever intelligence is supposed to be behind the UFO phenomenon? And is there any selection criterion by which reported objects are considered true UFOs, other than the tautological one of seeing whether they fall on the grid or not?

Regarding the first of these, the answer seems to be 'very unlikely'. Very great care and not a little spherical geometry would be needed to establish the accuracy required for the plotting of a grid on the scale envisaged here, and this in itself would be a major project. Apparently Cathie did not extend his analysis to such lengths, although he did plot his graph on a sphere (something which other grid enthusiasts have failed to do) - a ping pong ball, I believe -

hardly an object of the size and accuracy to permit the establishment of a world-wide grid!

Leaving the second difficulty for a moment, Cathie seems quite unembarrassed about stating that he believes an object to be a UFO because it seems to travel along his grid. A careful reader of his works will surely find objects which are almost certainly meteors included as UFOs while other sightings which probably do present a genuine puzzle are rejected on the sole criterion of relation to the grid. With this sort of selection at work, any pattern can be 'proven'.

This above criticism does not apply only to Cathie. In fact it does not apply only to ufology, and it would be a rather self-righteous person who could not confess to such selectivity at some time or other. Nevertheless, it is a serious obstacle to research of any kind, and the very subtlety of its nature makes it especially dangerous and worthy of the wariness of all researchers.

These criticisms in themselves are serious and, when added to what has been said previously, are most discouraging to the Cathie theory. However, they are as nothing compared to the difficulties Cathie would face if the photographed object, deep beneath the ocean surface, proved to be something other than an alien aerial. Yet it now appears that the nature of this mysterious object must be seriously called into doubt.

During the first conference of Australian UFO research organisations, held at Terrigal (NSW) in October 1975, I was able to have a conversation with South Australia's Keith Basterfield on this very subject, and he confirmed something which I knew other researchers had long suspected - the 'aerial' was, in fact, a large

species of marine plant! Mr Basterfield told me that the 'aerial' had been identified by an acquaintance who was conversant with marine plants and who showed him smaller specimens of the same growth, appearing exactly as the object in the photograph.

The philosophical and methodological issues raised here go far beyond the present subject. What we face is the phenomenon of a theory which, at first sight, seems internally consistent and is even used as the basis for predictions, based on a total misunderstanding of evidence. The origin of Cathie's grid, indeed the very form of the grid itself, is based on something as ephemeral as a giant strand of kelp which happened to be in a certain place at a certain time and, by chance, had its branches orientated in a certain way.

Had a similar strand of kelp been photographed in, say, the English Channel and not the southern ocean, and had its branches been pointing in different directions, a different grid system with a different origin and expressible in different mathematical formulae would have been duly constructed. And I feel quite sure ufologists around the world would now be plotting the flight paths of their UFOs according to this grid, and giving sighs of wonder when they found the flight paths could be faithfully represented in just this way.

Whilst considering this subject, we should also recall that Cathie not only used his grid to account for UFO sightings, but claimed that his grid points could also be used to represent areas of gravitational anomaly and even areas where atomic bombs could explode (he believed that atomic reactions could only proceed at such points in the grid), as well as earthquakes, volcanoes and other natural events. He backed up his speculations by showing

that earthquake areas, atomic test sites and the like actually did lie on the points of his grid. If all this can be predicted from a grid whose point of origin is an overgrown kelp plant, the mind boggles at just what the construction of grids can lead to!

The appeal of the grid hypothesis (Cathie's or some other) holds too great a sway in many ufological circles to be lightly rejected. In fact, it is an example of that peculiar human phenomenon of holding on to deficient theories, not by trying to amass new evidence to show that the critics are wrong and the theory is true after all, not even by modifying the theory to take account of criticisms whilst still maintaining its essentials, but by trying to rescue the theory by making all sorts of extreme, unfounded and ad hoc assumptions.

Ufology is a fertile field for this phenomenon, especially some of the tenth-rate science fiction 'explanations' of how a space ship can travel faster than light, which never fail to be trotted out by believers in the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis as soon as Einstein's velocity limitation is mentioned, and the attempted verification Of the grid system by its supporters is clearly a case in point.

I have heard it seriously maintained that any mathematical errors in Cathie's work (and, mathematicians tell me, there are some) are deliberate. Why Cathie, who, I have been told by those who know him personally, is a sincere man, not out to create confusion, should act so mysteriously, is not elaborated upon.

Then again, there is the suggestion that Cathie's grid does not always work because he made the mistake of assuming it to be stationary, when in actual fact he should have worked on the assumption of a moving grid. Just what a moving grid would be

and how it might be plotted is anybody's guess, but I assume that if a stationary grid can be drawn to accommodate any scatter of random points, a moving grid could be made to accommodate anything in such a way that no amount of argument could reject it. Thus the grid system would be made forever safe, but at the high cost of being forever useless.

Enough has, I think, been said about grids and straight lines and flight paths. Perhaps some day genuine patterns will be found - real signals distinguished amid the random scatter -but, for the moment, it is safer to see all such alleged patterns as merely spurious signals; apparent patterns in random noise, rather like pictures in the clouds, faces in marks on the wall or the 'I think I can ... I think I can ...' which children are asked to listen for in the sound of a locomotive.

Nevertheless, this does not imply that the distribution of UFO sightings is completely random. Certainly we should not take all apparent clusters at face value and, in fact, we would probably be wiser to class those clusters which seem marginal along with the straight lines and flight paths.

However, can the same be said for those areas which seem to produce UFOs year after year, in numbers far exceeding anything experienced in surrounding localities? Can all this be mere coincidence, even those areas which seem to have UFO flaps at regular intervals of, say, three years?

There may well be, indeed I would think that there probably is, something more than coincidence at work here. Most of the criticism of grids and flight paths do not apply UFOs are seen near and even on the ground, and strongly give the appearance of

zeroing in on specific areas - and sightings are simply too frequent, and in some cases too regular, to be attributed simply to coincidence.

Moreover, flap areas often appear to be the sites of other peculiar happenings which may not always be obviously related to UFOs. Whilst it would be presumptuous to pass judgment on the growing tradition that flap areas are also noted for ghost sightings, psychic revelations and the like, some flap areas at least also seem to be the sites of mysterious

sounds and it is not uncommon for contactee and psychic experiences to take place (all these effects have been noted in the reports of Mr Bill Chalker and Mr Keith Basterfield, regarding the Clare - South Australia and Tyrringham - New South Wales flap areas). If this feature of flap areas is confirmed, important information regarding the nature of the UFO phenomenon may be forthcoming.

In fact, if the reality of flap areas could be established beyond doubt and the periodicity of their flaps determined, a potentially powerful weapon in UFO research would be placed in the hands of investigators. No longer would they need to rely on the often breathless accounts of random witnesses, no longer would their sole source of information be sporadic appearances of UFOs. They would become the hunters, able to go out and meet the UFOs on their own ground as it were. What information could then be gained can only be guessed at now, but it is possible that this day may not be very distant, and then, perhaps, the riddle of the UFO will be solved or brought nearer to solution.

Assuming the reality of flap areas, the question ufologists must ask

themselves is why area X should be a flap area when area Z is not. This problem simplifies down to the complementary question of why area X and area Y are both flap areas, which in turn raises the question of what area X, area Y and all flap areas have in common that is not shared by area Z, and area A and all non-flap areas.

Put in this way, the problem sounds deceptively simple. But lest anyone should feel tempted to assume that it is simple, think for a moment on how many features an area (any area) may have; on the number of features either unique to one area or shared by others, etc., etc.

To be a little more specific, features of an area may include the predominant soil type. Or perhaps the important feature with regard to its ufological potential may be not so much the predominant soil type, but the ratio of one soil type to another! Or perhaps the important feature may be the temperature reached by a layer of soil three centimetres below the surface of the area's highest point at ten o'clock on the morning of the Twelfth of July! Or perhaps it is the angle of the land's relief, or the predominant rock type. Or any one of millions of features.

You may think that I am exaggerating to the point of stupidity, and perhaps you would be right. I really don't expect the reason why some areas are flap areas and others are not to depend upon the temperature of the soil three centimetres below the surface at a certain time of year; but I cannot be sure - I do not know. Neither can I be sure that the real reason is not something as absurd (to our way of thinking) and as unlikely to be discovered as just such a feature. If it is, chances of solving the mystery are not good - we cannot examine every possible feature, because the features of an area are virtually infinite. A needle in a haystack would be an

easily found article by comparison!

Hopefully the secret of the flap areas is not as obscure as this, and let us add, there is some reason to suspect that it may not be.

This hope is based upon the belief (and it is little more than a belief at present) that flap areas are somehow associated with anomalies in the magnetic field of the Earth. This hypothesis does not, at this stage, attempt to answer the question of why such an association should exist; it only points to the apparent evidence supporting the contention that areas of magnetic anomaly tend to be areas of enhanced UFO activity.

However, if this association is in fact correct, certain implications for the nature of the UFO phenomenon would appear obvious. For example, I think it would be rather difficult to associate UFOs with extraterrestrial spacecraft (at least in the conventional 'nuts and bolts hardware' sense) or terrestrial experimental craft (unless we are prepared to admit a super-secret programme of intergovernmental investigation of such areas, for some totally mysterious reason).

Likewise, it would not seem obvious that misinterpretations of ordinary, natural phenomena should occur more frequently in areas of magnetic anomaly unless there is some as yet undiscovered mechanism whereby anomalies in terrestrial magnetism have some effect upon the brains of people constantly exposed to them, and unless this effect can be shown to result in hallucinations and faulty perception (sometimes at regular intervals). This would remain a possible hypothesis. However, there is no independent evidence for it and, in any case, the onus of proof must be upon those who employ such a theory those very

people who are trying to explain the UFO phenomenon without assuming the existence of factors unknown to present day science.

What positive information the alleged association of UFOs and magnetic anomalies may bring to light, however, is not at all dear, except for the strong indication that the phenomenon is essentially an electromagnetic one, or that, at least, electro-magnetism plays a very large role in its manifestation.

Nevertheless, the possibilities which may be opened for UFO research if such a correlation can be established look very promising, Perhaps the key to the long-awaited explanation of the mystery lies in just such a relationship as this, but, of course, the relationship will need to be firmly established first we must beware of the very real possibility of grasping at apparent straws. To work towards such an end (either complete confirmation or complete denial) is one area of UFO research which should be pursued with the hope of making some real headway into the problem.

~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~

5 - What Could They Be?

Some pretty wild hypotheses have been put forward from to time posing as explanations for the UFO mystery. Indeed we cannot say anything else about the UFO problem, we may at least make this remark - the UFO phenomenon seems to bring out the most marked tendency in people to construct wildly improbable ideas.

Thus we are handed such exotic pieces of science fiction posing as fact as the Hollow Earth Theory (the very term 'theory' is certainly out of place when employed to described such a jumble of utter rubbish as the Hollow Earthers hand out).

These people seriously (or so it would seem) desire us to believe that the Earth is actually hollow; not merely hollow for the sake of being hollow, but hollow for the sake of accommodating the vast civilisations of 'other people' who man the UFOs. Of course, these UFOs reach our upper world through the only logical route, i.e. the hole in the North Pole (which, after all, has been photographed by earth satellites - the black circle seen at the polar point in some satellite photographs is not caused by a blind spot in the satellite's camera, it is what it appears to be - a literal hole in the ground!)

In an attempt to give some consistency to their fantasies, the Hollow Earthers invent an internal sun which supplies light and warmth to the otherwise stygian regions. Incidentally, scientists are wrong in thinking that the aurora is caused by solar particles - every Hollow Farther worth his salt knows that it is really caused by the light of the internal sun shining out through the hole at the North Pole (and presumably at the South Pole also) - the same hole(s?) through which the UFOs come from and go to their

subterranean home.

Fortunately, most speculations are a little more obedient to the scientific method than this rather ludicrous attempt at theory. For any explanation of the UFO phenomenon to be classed as scientific, two stipulations must be met. It must offer an adequate explanation of all the features of the phenomenon (not just those which seem most likely to the theorist) and it must not run counter to any established fact.

Perhaps this last point needs clarification first, as it may easily lead to misunderstanding. I am certainly not saying that an explanation for the UFO phenomenon, to be scientific, must lie within the bounds of known science. The very fact that this phenomenon has seemed so mysterious and has been such a perplexing problem for so long indicates strongly (though not, of course, necessarily) that the answer lies outside the present bounds of knowledge, and that new facts may need to be postulated and discovered before an adequate solution can be presented.

What I am saying, though, is that an explanation, to be scientific (and therefore to have any real chance of being correct) cannot, without very sound evidence, reject or modify any accepted finding of science. Of course, accepted facts vary in degree of certainty Newtonian gravity, for example, is now known to be only an approximation of the truth and, though his theories are satisfactory for most purposes, where calculations involving extreme velocities are concerned the more accurate Einsteinian gravitational theory must be employed. It is possible that certain scientific theories may need to be brought up to date when the long-awaited answer to the UFO problem finally comes, but such revision of standing theories is never a task to be lightly or

amateurishly performed.

Certain strongly established scientific facts can never be altered. To take just one example, the spherical nature (or rather the approximate spherical nature) of the Earth is now so strongly established that nothing the Flat Earther enthusiasts can present as evidence will ever turn the tide of scientific opinion.

The Hollow Earthers are also in this position nothing they have ever produced as evidence does, or ever can, support their fantastic claims, whereas all scientific research concerning the internal structure of the Earth, using evidence gleaned by checking factors from artificial satellite orbits (these satellites would follow a different orbit if the density of the Earth decreased with depth, as would be required by the Hollow Earth theory) to the monitoring of earthquake waves, supports to the point of virtual certainty the fact that the density of our planet increases right down to the core.

On the other hand, nothing discovered by science so far disproves the existence of extraterrestrial beings, nor is there anything that can be used to disprove the existence of spirits. Certainly, science does not require belief in spirits, and there remain difficulties concerning the method whereby any extra-terrestial life-form could reach our planet (some rethinking about current scientific ideas may be justified here. Yet there is nothing to a priori preclude either the extraterrestrial hypothesis or the spirit hypothesis as a scientific explanation for the UFO phenomenon, if the evidence really points in one or other of these directions. These hypotheses are in a different category entirely from the Hollow Earth speculation.

Secondly, I remarked that a theory of UFOs (or of anything else

for that matter), to be truly scientific, must attempt to explain all the features of the phenomenon which have been established as real aspects of that phenomenon. There is always a temptation to prune the evidence for a phenomenon in order to make it fit a preconceived theory or to make it slot nicely within the framework of known science. But making a theory fit science is not the same as constructing a scientific theory - a simple fact which everyone engaged in science would do well to remember!

Thus, those 'naturalistic' theories of UFOs which appear to explain, simply and economically, relatively simple (and, therefore, scientifically less embarrassing) phenomena such as nocturnal lights, but are unable to do justice to the more exotic reports, can hardly be termed scientific explanations of the entire UFO phenomenon. To simply dismiss these latter cases, even though they are as well-attested as the former, is to revert to the totally unscientific attitude of closed-minded dogmatism.

Thus, science steers its course between the Scylla of insufficient respect for established findings and the Charybedis of an outlook made overly narrow by the refusal to admit that previously uncharted facts may exist. Ufology, like any science, must navigate this same perilous strait if it is ever to reach the calm waters of Discovery.

The major theories of the cause of the UFO phenomena that qualify as scientific in the sense discussed above, are the Extraterrestrial Intelligence Hypothesis (ETI - sometimes called simply the 'Extraterrestrial Hypothesis' or 'ETH', however, as this appellation omits reference to the intelligence postulated by upholders of this theory, the longer name, or its abbreviation, will be used here), the Time Travel Hypothesis (TT), the Natural

Phenomena Hypothesis (NP), the Human Artefact Hypothesis (HA) and the Paraphysical Hypothesis (PP).

Very roughly, these hypotheses maintain, in order of presentation, that UFOs are: spaceships from another planet or station in outer space; human beings of the distant future visiting their own past (our present); some inanimate natural phenomenon which has either not yet been catalogued by official science or (if already known) is observed under highly unusual conditions; some man-made craft or machine, probably highly secret; some supernormal phenomenon similar, at least in broad detail, to ghosts, poltergeists and the other various phenomena which compose the subject matter of psychic research.

Of course, each of these general hypotheses has a number of sub-hypotheses, theories which, whilst agreeing with each other and the general hypothesis in broad detail, differ on certain points which may be quite important and even crucial to the credibility of the whole.

Thus, the old version (or, should I say, one old version) of the ETI theory held that the 'saucers' came from some planet within the Solar System, most probably Mars. Since the space programme, however, Mars and the other planets accompany Earth on its voyage through space have been found to be far less hospitable than was thought only one or two decades ago, and hence the details of the ETI have been forced to undergo some quite drastic revision.

Similarly, the gradual increase in information concerning the UFO phenomenon itself has necessitated some re-thinking of theories. Again, we can discern a shift in the ETI, from the rather naive 'nuts

and bolts hardware' of the Buck Rogers-style spaceships postulated by some of the early UFO writers, to the much more complex speculations, forced upon ETI believers by the gradual accumulation of UFO reports, which strongly suggest that something other than the physical transportation of craft is involved (e.g. reports involving sudden materialisations and disappearances which cannot be accounted for on a simple 'nuts and bolts' theory).

For the present purposes, we will not concern ourselves with the different varieties and forms taken by each of these theories, except by way of an occasional mention, but we shall consider a general version of each hypothesis thought to be most potent in explaining the UFO phenomenon as we know it today. I hope I will not be accused of setting up theories of straw in following this approach, and I hope that the temptation to do just that will not cause me to misrepresent any hypothesis.

(a) Extraterrestrial Intelligence Hypothesis (ETI)

This remains the most popular hypothesis for the explanation of the UFO phenomenon, both among investigators and (even more especially) among the general public.

Often it is referred to as the 'Extraterrestrial Hypothesis'; however, this is strictly too wide a name, as ETI does not merely say that UFOs are extraterrestrial in origin, it specifically says that they are also under the control of minds which are not human and which do not belong to this planet. A minority opinion believes that UFOs themselves are the alien life-form, but the general consensus of opinion is that they are really constructions built by some intelligent; alien creature and either piloted by the creature itself or

remotely controlled by some sort of robot mechanism.

Most probably, say the upholders of this theory, these craft originated on a planet relatively remote from the Solar System (and hence from the Earth), although some believe that their immediate, as distinct from their ultimate, origin is much closer to home - on the moon or one of the other solar planets, or even in some remote part of the Earth, possibly under the ocean. A few even suspect that these UFO bases are under the ground (shades of the Hollow Earth theory).

Yet other ETI enthusiasts seek the immediate origin of the UFOs in some artificial space station - a super-UFO - floating free through the void of space or, perhaps, 'parked' at some suitable locality, e.g. the neutral gravity points of the Earth-moon system. An interesting variation of this idea sees Earth itself as the place of origin of the UFOs - the Earth of the distant past, before some unrecorded catastrophe overtook the highly advanced race of men who (so this story goes) inhabited this green orb. Fortunately, not all members of this elder race died in the holocaust some 'took to the stars', where they have lived, generation after generation, until now they are coming home (perhaps after countless millions of years away they are feeling just a little bit homesick!).

For many people, the terms 'UFO' and 'extraterrestrial spaceship' are virtually synonymous, and this belief has been reinforced over and over again by the media and science fiction writings. However, there are now many investigators of the UFO phenomenon who believe that all is not well with the popular belief, and a number of former champions of ETI are starting to turn to other possible alternatives (John A. Keel being an outstanding example).

In my opinion, the most pressing difficulties encountered by the ETI are; (a) the problem of the distance which must be travelled by an interstellar space ship; (b) the difficulty of accounting for the vast variety of objects reported - not only the variety of craft but also of occupants; (c) the senseless activity of creatures generally considered to be highly advanced; (d) the reports of miniature UFOs (sometimes complete with miniature occupants); (e) the peculiar nature of the objects themselves (they seem to share the properties of both solid objects and non-material entities); (f) contactee reports and the reported UFO-associated psychic events in general.

To my mind, the existence of any one of these features casts a serious shadow over ETI as a scientific hypothesis; if features of a phenomenon cannot be accounted for by a hypothesis, the scientific procedure is to modify that hypothesis or, where necessary, reject it altogether. Unfortunately though, ETI has become a dogma (as attractive scientific hypothesis often do) in the minds of a number of researchers, and some features of the UFO phenomenon not in accord with it have been rejected. Thus the UFO of popular literature is not the UFO so often reported - the former has been given to the general reading public in a 'refined' form, a form which fits each respective author's view of the subject and this view has been, traditionally ETI.

The difficulties listed previously do, however, vary in their degree of seriousness as objections to ETI. For example, the problem of distance would not be serious if the UFOs originated within the Solar System, either as the constructions of indigenous life-forms inhabiting one of the other solar planets (a very unlikely hypothesis, according to the findings of the space programmes), or as craft used by extra-solar beings who have established a base on

one of the sun's planets, or who inhabit an artificial world now residing in or near the Solar System.

This last suggestion is the stronger of the two. However there is, as yet anyway, not the slightest shred of evidence supporting it. No artificial constructions have been seen on the moon or Mars (the two most logical planets on which to establish bases, due to their low escape velocity, relatively 'mild' temperature, pressure and radiation conditions and their proximity to Earth - surely a planet of interest to aliens because of its life), neither have any artificial worlds been seen through our telescopes, nor heard via our radio telescopes.

If such artificial worlds do exist and are in communication with the UFOs, it is indeed strange that something has not been seen, or that some of their radio communication has not readied at least one of our radio telescopes.

The 'Solar Base' version of ETI would, if it could be shown to be correct, go a long way towards overcoming the distance problem, because it does not necessitate the crossing of vast reaches of space in craft having the cramped dimensions of the average UFO. The nearest star even remotely likely to have life-bearing planets (and, by the law of averages, these are not likely to harbour intelligent life) is some ten light years away.

That is to say, a ray of light takes ten years to reach us from that star, even though light travels at the speed of 186,000 miles per second! Spaceships must travel more slowly than this (Einstein has shown that the speed of light is the maximum possible velocity), and ten years is certainly a long time to be cooped up in an object thirty feet in diameter or less!

A solar base, however, would allow the possibility of enormous artificial worlds crossing space, maybe taking many generations to do it, establishing self-sufficient colonies on planetary systems right across the galaxy. But could we seriously expect a race which could perform such an engineering (yes, and social) miracle to spend its time, on reaching its destination, flitting about lonely country roads, scaring the life out of all-night drivers and clandestine lovers?

Would such a romantic-sounding hypothesis be considered adequate to account for the great variety of types of UFO and occupant reported? These occupants seem to come in all sizes and quite a few different shapes. Some are giants (apparently from a planet with a smaller mass and lower gravity than our own - a planet which would be suitable for giantism) others are dwarfs (indicating that they come from a planet of such large mass that a being the size of man would be too heavy to be an efficient organism in such powerful gravity).

Yet, both appear to be quite happy in our gravity (which, one would imagine, must feel like lead boots for the giants and weightlessness for the dwarfs) and both appear quite able to breathe our air, even though the giants must see it as a soupy mixture and the dwarfs as a near vacuum. Moreover, the oxygen and carbon dioxide content in our atmosphere must combine to form a pretty potent mixture for the giants. These two gases, when inhaled in quantities over and above that of an organism's normal intake, can produce quite severe mental effects. It is a wonder that the giants are not experiencing some psychedelic trip after breathing our atmosphere!

Such considerations as the above, it will be realised, equally apply

to versions of ETI which attempt to overcome the distance problem by inventing exotic means of interstellar travel which, somehow, get around the speed of light limitation. It is possible that such means of travel do exist - at the present stage in our understanding of the physical Universe we would be foolish to dogmatically deny the possibility - but, be this as it may, such means of transport only alleviate one problem whilst leaving the other, more serious ones untouched.

Another problem which should be mentioned concerns those reports of mini-UFOs, especially those associated with mini-creatures. These are impossible to explain by the ETI theory according to all the indications of present knowledge. Life, to exhibit intelligence, simply could not be as small as some of the mini-men, the brain would not be sufficiently large to allow the myriad of complex nerve connections through which intelligence functions.

Yet to deny validity to reports involving mini-beings is to lapse back into dogmatism, until there is good independent reason for disbelieving these reports. As far as I am aware, no such reason has ever been put forward.

Strange as the reports of mini-beings may be, the full strangeness of the UFO phenomenon is encountered in those cases involving experiences of the form generally classified as 'psychic' or 'paraphysical'. These include not only the clearly 'spirtualistic' cases of contacteeism, but also those instances of visions, strange dreams, predictions of landings, physical healings after a close encounter, materialisations of 'apparitions' etc., etc.

These experiences are reported far too often for them to be

considered peripheral or unconnected with the basic UFO problem (as conservative ETI upholders are apt to believe), and the suggestion put forward by more recent ETI protagonists, viz, that they are a sign that the aliens are taking over human minds, sounds rather like science fiction and hardly does justice to the reports.

The more extreme cases of 'UFO possession' (as Beckley terms it) are so similar to the reports of demon possession dating back to biblical times, that an explanation in terms of a sudden desire by extraterrestrials to take over humanity does not only smack of science fiction, but removes the whole phenomenon from its historical setting.

Such general considerations, therefore, do not (in my opinion) support ETI, and it is the contemplation of such difficulties which has led many ufologists to abandon ETI altogether in favour of possible alternatives, to which we shall now turn.

(b) Time Travel (TT) (*)

Briefly, this hypothesis states that the UFO phenomenon is caused by the visits of men of the future returning to examine their own past. Although sounding even more fantastic than ETI, the TT theory has a number of superior features and, in fact, once the reality of time travel is accepted, the rest of the hypothesis fits together fairly well, though not entirely satisfactorily, as we shall shortly see.

The trouble is, we do not know that time travel is possible; we are not even sure that the term makes sense (is time the sort of medium through which travel is feasible?), and until this question can be answered the theory must remain burdened by a handicap

of doubt which was not shared by ETI (we know that space travel, at least over short distances, and probably over much longer distances, is possible) and this tends to give ETI a slight edge over TT for acceptance as a scientific theory. Nevertheless, the difficulties with ETI balance the ledger somewhat, and if TT can overcome these then the postulation of time travel as a possibility may be justified,

TT readily explains the difference in shape and appearance of UFOs by pointing out that they are simply the different designs used at different epochs in the future history of mankind. As there is no reason (presumably) why people of, say, a thousand years in the future and people of a million years in the future should not both visit the later twentieth century simultaneously, there is no reason why this fact should not be apparent in the differences observed in their craft.

Possibly, the people themselves would appear different also, the way we appear different from the Neanderthal, and this, it may be argued, explains the different types of occupant seen. It could certainly explain the occupants' ability to be at home in terrestrial conditions of atmosphere and gravity, an observation so perplexing in ETI.

---

[*] I owe much of the argument in this section to Dr G. Stevens of Sydney.

However, the vast variety of UFOs and, especially, occupants seems to push even TT to unreasonable limits. For instance, is there sufficient reason to believe that the human race will eventually become diminutive in stature to the extent that normal

men of the future would appear dwarf to a man of today? Then, what are we to make of the hairy creatures sometimes seen in conjunction with UFOs, not to mention the occasional cyclops?

But the most serious difficulty of the TT, and one which seems to be in no more favourable a position than ETI, concerns the behaviour of the UFOs and their occupants. Such seemingly childish, not to say downright stupid, pranks as stopping cars and terrifying their occupants, asking questions about subjects which should be familiar to them, posing as people from other planets, etc. does not seem consistent with the activities of advanced time travellers, unless the whole UFO phenomenon, as we see it, is deliberately contrived to alter the future course of history.

This last suggestion sounds absolutely bizarre and, to be perfectly honest, I think it really is, but, given the absurd (to our mind) situation of time travel, it presents itself as a possibility to be reckoned with. Let's take the old science fiction plot of a person being transported back in time from the present day and, whilst in the past, causing some event to take place which without his 'unnatural' presence at this time would not have taken place. By this event, the time traveller has changed the course of history, as he has set in motion a chain of cause and effect which otherwise would never have been initiated.

Now, suppose that at some unimaginably distant future 1 date, mankind masters time travel (if there is anything there to master) and decides upon a course of altering history in such a way that a certain desired state of affairs would eventuate. Could he travel back in time to a pre-calculated moment when the social factors favouring the initiation of the required changes would be most suitable, and act in such a way that history would from that

moment on follow a pre-calculated, artificial path?

The sensible answer is, *No'. For a start, to change the past in this manner would mean that the sort of society in which the being himself lived may never come to fruition - perhaps he would be altering history to such an extent that he himself would never come into being!

This whole subject opens a Pandora's Box of philosophical speculation, and may indeed be of more than academic interest in view of some recent cosmological theories concerning the possibility of matter travelling back in time after entering those strange, collapsed stars colloquially known as 'black holes'.

Time travel through black holes is different entirely from the kind of thing relevant here, but it still may be possible that there exist at this very moment atoms which were (will be?) created millions of years in the future and travelled backwards in time to the present. The philosophical issues concerning the fluidity of the past, multiplicity of the present and indeterminacy of the future are already raised by these astro physical theories - it is only a matter of degree separating beings travelling through time and atoms travelling through time, philosophically speaking.

Of course, the whole question of matter travelling backwards in time through black holes may turn out to be just a piece of mathematical fiction, prevented from becoming reality by the nature of time itself, but the fact that the possibility has been seriously proposed does at least give our wild speculations some claim to respectability.

Now suppose, for the sake of argument, that a man from the future

came back to our time for the express purpose of performing some 'historical engineering' with the object of changing his past (our future). Would it not be possible that the method he could use might involve the deliberate creation of a false, but useful, myth, e.g. the myth that this planet is being visited by alien life-forms?

A moment's reflection will soon show that the ETI interpretation of the UFO phenomenon has brought about considerable changes in the collective thought of mankind; beliefs and attitudes have been created which probably would have never originated but for the UFOs, and we dare not even speculate about the effects of these beliefs and attitudes may be in the very long term. Could all this have been engineered by beings thousands of years in the future - our remote descendants?

I must say that I consider this flight of fancy to be most improbable, but I present it for what it is worth. However, even if this rather sci-fi version of TT explains those features of the UFO phenomenon which concern the activities and appearance of the craft and entities, it still fails, in my opinion, to explain the psychic aspect, and gives the general impression that this whole attempt at a consistent answer is forced, contrived and uneconomical. I would, therefore, place little value upon it unless all other explanations are found wanting.

(c) 'Natural Phenomena Hypothesis (NP)

We come now from the far-out fringes of ufological speculation to the seemingly safer ground nearer to home. Until now, we have considered that the UFO phenomenon must be something which lies outside the realm of normal experience and normal understanding, and indeed this is how it mostly appears to those

who have experienced it first hand or who have done depth investigation into a good sample of reports.

Nevertheless, it is always good science and sound common sense to look to what we know and can explain before trying to tackle what we do not know and cannot explain, provided, of course, that we do not become blind to the fact that there may really be phenomena which lie beyond the present bounds of knowledge and that, should these phenomena ever be experienced, they will be conspicuous by their non-conformity when judged by the standards of present knowledge.

Now, the UFO phenomenon certainly seems to be conspicuously non-conformist, but is this non-conformity apparent or real? Have we been too hasty in assuming that a conventional, mundane explanation for the phenomenon cannot be found?

There are some researchers into the problem who would not hesitate to answer 'Yes' to this question, and who would proceed to give an account of the UFO phenomenon in terms of natural, terrestrial and inanimate phenomena.

The simplest version of NP is to assume that the UFOs do not represent a single phenomenon at all (known or unknown), but are merely misidentifications of phenomena which are often not merely well known to scientists, but also to the witness himself. In fact, the majority of UFO reports can be quite adequately explained by this theory - people frequently report common objects as mysterious unidentifieds (even including the moon) and hence the theory that those objects which remain unidentified are equally common phenomena has a certain appeal.

However, it is logically incorrect to argue from the fact that some 'UFOs' are explicable in terms of NP the conclusion that all UFOs must be thus explicable. This structure of argument is logically (and therefore scientifically) invalid. It is as fallacious as the argument that because some spiders are harmless, they all must be harmless.

The only way such an argument could gain some degree of scientific respectability would be for an essential characteristic of those objects initially reported as UFOs but subsequently identified to be found to be common also to those reported UFOs which remain unidentified.

For instance, if it so happened (to take an absurdly simple case) that all reported and subsequently identified UFOs were found to be examples of ball lightning, and that further investigation revealed that all UFOs still awaiting identification were observed in the region of severe thunderstorms and, moreover, displayed the same colour and behaviour of lightning balls, the identification of UFOs with ball lightning would appear almost certain.

But is there some common feature shared by both identified UFOs and those which remain unidentified, which may provide a clue to the nature of the latter? It would seem not. The notion that all cases, if suitably investigated, reveal the UFO to be one of the brighter stars or planets or something equally well known, is simply not true. Indeed, there appear to be more differences than similarities between those cases which are identified and those which remain a mystery.

Both come from ordinary people (mentally unbalanced people very rarely report UFOs) who are puzzled by what they

experienced. Likewise, a normal degree of accuracy in reporting is shared by both classes of cases. Those reports which can be identified are usually cleared up fairly quickly, often immediately and at other times with certainty only after an astronomical ephemeris has been consulted, although, even in these latter cases, the investigator usually has a fair idea of the true nature of the object reported.

It is interesting to note that, even granted a certain degree of interpretation and exaggeration (usually not excessive, however), the witness's description of the object fits fairly closely to the true appearance of the phenomenon. In fact, the actual description may be a truer representation of what was seen than the description of the same object by someone who knows the nature of what he is looking at, and interprets accordingly.

Thus, someone seeing the planet Jupiter low on the horizon but not realising what it was may report a 'luminous globe with three spikes', whereas another person, seeing the planet and knowing it to be Jupiter, may give the classic textbook description of 'a brilliant yellowish star that doesn't twinkle'. However, under the assumed conditions, when viewed with normal eyes Jupiter may actually look more like a 'globe with spikes' than a 'brilliant star'. Try looking at Jupiter yourself the next fine night, and try describing it 'virgin', as it were without any preconceived ideas as to what it should look like.

Very often the appearance of a bright planet in the sky will being forth a rash of reports, but such reports are as instructive for what they do not say as for what they do. When Jupiter comes to opposition, for instance, only a small proportion of people report silver discs in the sky, or cigar-shaped objects with portholes, or

landings with occupants. What they report is, quite plainly, Jupiter!

This is instructive because it hints that another sample of people, taken from a similar cross-section of humanity and representing essentially the same social, intellectual and moral backgrounds but reporting discs, cigar-shaped objects and landings with occupants, are also relaying essentially what they in fact experienced (with discrepancy confined to detail rather than the essence of the experience).

In fact, I do not think that it would be an exaggeration to say that to believe their experiences were essentially other than what they reported would be irrational, especially in view of the further fact that such experiences show remarkable similarity to each other, irrespective of the environment (social, physical or intellectual) of the witness. They are, in fact, every bit as internally consistent as reports of Jupiter, Mars or Venus.

Such considerations have led a few NP believers to construct somewhat more sophisticated theories to account for the UFO phenomenon. Such theories, whilst maintaining the central proposition that the phenomenon can be explained solely by reliance upon natural phenomena and established physical laws, without the need for invoking any new laws or phenomena, have, nevertheless, departed from the view that the UFOs are merely misinterpretations of well-known phenomena. These NP theorists maintain that there is, indeed, a phenomenon responsible for the UFO reports, but they differ from ETI and TT believers in maintaining that this phenomenon is explicable on purely physical grounds.

Two classes of natural phenomena which have readily received the

blame for the UFO phenomenon are mirages and ball lightning. Marsh gas is another hot favourite; however, I know of no theory which attempts to explain all UFO reports by invoking this phenomenon. High altitude UFOs are hard to explain along these lines, and so marsh gas is usually given as an explanation in association with sundry other naturalistic phenomena.

It is not my intention to examine mirage and ball lightning theories separately, or to compare the strengths and weaknesses of each individual hypothesis, as the acid test for both, as it must be for any and every hypothesis, is to see whether the phenomenon in question can be adequately explained. I will, however, remark that the mirage (temperature inversion) explanation has become something of a dogma for many who are looking for a naturalistic explanation for the UFO phenomenon.

It is, however, a theory which (unlike most others in the UFO field) is amenable to some degree of mathematical expression. Refractive indices of air at different temperatures and pressures, the angle through which a beam of light refracts, etc. may all be calculated, and this enables a much more rigorous test to be applied to the theory than could be applied to a merely qualitative hypothesis.

Unfortunately, such quantitative analysis is not often available where this theory has been given in explanation. The only work of this nature of which I am aware is that of F.G. Menkello. Unfortunately for the theory, Menkello's work shows that temperatures of the order of several thousand degrees Kelvin would be needed to explain most UFO observations, and to say that such conditions are not likely to be met with in the terrestrial atmosphere is to be guilty of something more than mere

understatement!

Likewise, the ball lightning theory has a few specific flaws. For instance, the only place where ball lightning is known to exist for anything approaching the time required to give rise to a UFO report, is near the centre of severe thunderstorms. It is very doubtful if such balls could exist under the conditions prevalent at the times of most UFO reports. (It might be worth mentioning here that, when examining the total reports for Australia during 1975, the one meteorological condition which failed to produce a single UFO report was that of thunderstorm!)

These individual difficulties are not, however, as important as the general problem of the inability of NP to account for the vast majority of reported UFOs. Mostly, theorists who put forward such suggestions concentrate on nocturnal light phenomena (the easiest to 'explain') and either neglect completely or else treat rather glibly the more spectacular cases for which a ready explanation, according to their theories, cannot be given.

Consequently, when the whole range of UFO cases are taken into consideration, NP is on far more shaky ground than either ETI or TT. Not only are the psychic cases left unexplained, but most of the occupant reports which cannot be dismissed as hallucination, and even many daylight discs, must remain unexplained as well. Clearly, any theory which purports to be an explanation for the UFO phenomenon but leaves, in fact, most of the features of the phenomenon unexplained, cannot be seriously considered as a scientific hypothesis.

(d) Human Artefact Hypothesis (HA)

By this rather prepossessing name, I include those theories which hold that the UFO phenomenon has its origin in the observation of human constructions, especially balloons, aircraft, etc. Sometimes the theory is put forward that the UFO is a particular type of aircraft, probably a military or experimental machine of a highly secret nature, but, more often, they are assumed to be quite ordinary aircraft seen under exceptional conditions.

There is really not a great deal to be said about this theory that has not already been mentioned in our discussion of NP. Most of the problems encountered by NP are encountered by HA as well. In fact, HA is in an even weaker position than NP, in that it totally fails to explain historic cases of UFO-like phenomena.

(e) Paraphysical Hypothesis (PP)

In recent years there has been much speculation, and not a little evidence, that the Universe is much more complex than we had previously believed, and that physical phenomena may not be the only kind of happenings possible. This realm of suspected events lying outside the domain of the physical has usually been termed the 'psychic'; however, as this word applies more specifically to the mind and as there is no reason to suppose that so-called psychic phenomena are restricted to the mental sphere (although many such phenomena are), the term 'paraphysical' is to be preferred.

With such a rise in the respectability of paraphysics, it is only to be expected that the subject of UFOs would sooner or later come to be viewed from this new angle - if for no other reason than to attempt to eliminate one unknown by incorporating it into another. Nevertheless, an examination of the spectrum of UFO reports certainly reveals some similarity with reports of psychic and other

paraphysical events, and this similarity may be more than the superficial likeness between various classes of inexplicable happenings.

The beauty and the danger of the PP is that it can be extended to include just about any UFO event one could name. like TT, we do not know just how much of the total UFO phenomenon can legitimately be explained by PP; it may be that we are quite right in extending the realm of the paraphysical indefinitely and thereby explaining all UFO cases, but it may also be true that there is a very finite limit to the ability of paraphysical events to explain UFO phenomena (for instance, it may be that physical trace cases cannot be explained by the evocation of any possible paraphysical event), and, until we know what the limits of paraphysical events are, we cannot with certainty use PP as an explanation for all UFO reports.

A third possibility also exists of course; viz, that paraphysical phenomena do not exist at all, which renders PP null and void! The only way to make any adequate judgment on PP is to have a look at the types of phenomena generally believed to be paraphysical, with the view to gaining some information regarding the constant properties of these phenomena and then ascertaining whether the properties of UFO phenomena agree with those of the paraphysical.

In practice, this virtually means listing the properties of one phenomenon against those of another, and, although there is too little known with certainty about either phenomenon for such a project to produce any definite results, at least it might help to bring the problem into somewhat clearer focus.

However, before anything further is said on this particular matter,

yet another complication needs to be mentioned. Most upholders of PP believe (as John Keel expressed it) that UFO research should become a part of paraphysics, implying that the sort of events reported by UFO witnesses are essentially the same as those reported by people who see ghosts, experience poltergeists or suffer another of the many forms of mysterious disturbance so well known to paraphysical researchers.

However, it is possible that PP may still be correct in a general sense, without implying that UFOs are directly related to poltergeists and the like. Rather, it could be argued, UFOs are a totally unknown phenomenon, inexplicable both in physical and simple (!) paraphysical terms, but nevertheless potentially amenable to explanation when sufficient information about the nature of the Universe becomes known. And this required information will become known when paraphysical events are incorporated into our view of Nature (i.e. a theory sufficiently adequate to account for paraphysical phenomena will also be adequate to explain UFOs, even though the latter may not be, strictly speaking, paraphysical).

To take another example, a century ago neither aurorae nor cometary gas tails could be satisfactorily explained within the scientific framework then existing. However, after the atomic nucleus was found to be divisible and the proton was discovered, both these phenomena became explicable within the enlarged understanding of the Universe brought about by this discovery in atomic physics. That is not to say, of course, that comet trails and aurorae are two aspects of the same phenomenon, or even that they are closely related phenomena, but it does suggest that the remote cause of both lies within the subatomic realm and could only be known after our understanding of this realm was enlarged.

It may just be possible that some discovery, in a field which now seems as unrelated to both UFOs and paraphysics as atomic physics seemed to comets and aurorae a century ago, may provide just that enlargement of our understanding necessary to explain both these enigmatic phenomena, without necessarily reducing one to the other. For the moment this must remain a speculation, although such a possibility should always be borne in mind - no one can guarantee that the UFO phenomenon can be explained within the present-day scientific framework.

Nevertheless, having mentioned this possible complication, let us hope that we may not be quite as much in the dark as it suggests. At leasts let us hope that we have sufficient light to see if comparisons really do exist between 'conventional' paraphysical phenomena and UFOs, and thereby see if PP - the 'uncomplicated' version thereof - is at least a reasonable hypothesis.

Let me say at the outset that even that portion of the paraphysical which can legitimately be called psychic seems amply able to explain many of those areas which the other hypotheses failed to account for adequately, viz, the contactee experiences (which seem to be at one with spiritualistic and mediumistic happenings) and those cases involving the reports of telepathic experiences and feelings of subjective levitation.

Even cases of voices being heard over 'ham' radios, or mystery phone calls in which the caller appears to know details of the witness that are beyond the knowledge of another person, may have a psychic cause - not necessarily in the sense of hallucinations, but possibly in the form of psycho-kinetic or poltergeist effects, caused by the witness's subconscious mind, upon the diaphragm of a telephone or a radio headphone.

This may seem a far-fetched explanation, but is it really so improbable, considering the mental photographs of Ted Serios, or the voices (allegedly of spirits, but more probably due to some psycho-kinetic effect) allegedly imprinted on tape recorders in recent years?

Also, many occupant cases seem to fit quite well into a 'ghost story' scheme. For instance, the Casa Blanca case of August 22, 1955, appears to warrant a rather ghostly interpretation, as the occupants (dwarfs) in this case were not only transparent, but the witnesses experienced visions of the UFOs and occupants, as well as of disembodied arms which appeared to beckon to them.

Likewise, are we to include the Boardman case of July 18, 1967 (in which a minister felt drawn to look outside, there seeing a figure clad in a luminous suit, which later became a shapeless glow and vanished) as a UFO occupant report or a ghost sighting?

Then again, from a different aspect, it must be remembered that Tyrrell, in his classic work, Apparitions, states that, 'visible apparitions behave as a rule ... with regard to the lighting of the scene, the distance of the percipient, and the presence of intervening objects, exactly as any material person would do', including the possibility of casting a shadow.

He even relates a case where an apparition became clearer as the witnesses' eyes grew accustomed to the dark, and other cases where apparitions were reflected in mirrors. All this would seem to indicate a physical nature for apparitions (as similar observations indicate a physical nature for UFOs), but the sudden vanishing of apparitions would equally seem to run counter to this (as would similar vanishings and materialisations of UFOs).

Moreover, in analogy to physical trace UFO cases, there are physical trace ghost cases (footprints appearing in dust, chairs which depress as if someone is seated thereon, etc.), not to mention the physical effects of poltergeists. Here, once again, we seem faced with a phenomenon which straddles the nonphysical and the physical and leaves us at a complete loss for explanation.

The appearance of apparently physical craft seen in the air seems, at first sight, a strong divergence from the traditional ghost story, and such observations may appear to contradict PP and yet, I remember once hearing a story (said to be true) of a ghost plane which at certain times would be seen circling an English airport.

The plane is said to have been a small model which crashed some years ago, killing the pilot, and to be well known (ghost fashion) to the airport staff. If there is any truth at all behind this sighting, it would seem that we have evidence for a paraphysical phenomenon capable of giving rise to solid, or apparently solid, ghost craft, the sudden appearances and disappearances of which are strikingly reminiscent of the UFOs.

However, be this as it may, the similarities which are most usually drawn between the UFO phenomenon and paraphysical happenings generally concern those reports (mostly of bygone years) concerning allegedly supernatural creatures such as elves, fairies, etc. For anyone wishing to study this aspect of ufology in more detail, Jacques Vallee's Passport to Magonia cannot be recommended too highly. Vallee discusses the reports of 'little people' from a variety of cultures and finds that not merely their appearance, but their behaviour and general features correspond strikingly to the modern UFO occupants.

Thus, dwarfs seem to feature most frequently in reports where the creatures were simply observed by human beings (i.e. where no contact was made on the part of the creature, or where only a very superficial contact was made). In cases where the creature did contact a human being for purposes of its own, it tended to take on a somewhat human appearance, in close correspondence to the modern contactee, as against mere occupant, report. In fact, stories of the 'good people' of Scot-land recount this ability to change their appearance as one of the features of these supernatural beings. They may appear as anything from a beautiful man or woman to a hideous monster exactly as our ufonauts can appear in any guise!

Similarly, trips to fairyland allegedly experienced by a number of people over the ages, and the contactee's flights to other planets, have so much in common that it is difficult to believe that the same psychological or psychic mechanism is not at work in both sets of experience. And, on a rather more sombre note, the theological phenomenon of demonic possession and the ufological phenomenon of UFO possession (as Beckley terms it) have exactly the same symptoms. However these maladies are to be explained, there would seem little doubt that the two are very closely related, if not identical.

On a different note, PP suggests an explanation for the apparently symbolic nature of many of the reported happenings associated with close encounter and contact cases. Ufologists have often remarked upon the dream-like nature of many of these cases, including features which seem to be directly symbolic. For instance, the Villas-Boas case, though most famous for the sexual events associated with it, contained equally important - if less spectacular - symbolic happenings, including the observation of a

'clock' on board the 'spacecraft' that had gradations every ninety degrees, but no hands.

This could be taken as a symbolic representation of the fact (described by virtually all visitors to 'fairyland') that time ceases to flow in 'fairyland'. If 'fairyland' is really the greatest depths of the subconscious mind, this observation fits in well with the time" less characteristics of visionary and mystical experience.

Such symbolism may not always be subjective; it may be enacted in reality. For instance, the Sao Sebastiano case of July 25, 1957, involved a witness being taken aboard a UFO and conversing telepathically with the crew. The feature to be noted at the moment is the malfunction of the witness's watch - it no longer worked after the experience. Could this have been a psycho-kinetic effect of the witness's subconscious mind, expressing the experience of timelessness, not in the form of visual symbols (as was the case, on this interpretation, with Villas-Boas) but in the more dramatic physical form of a destroyed timepiece? (Compare Uri Geller's performances with stopping watches.)

Such considerations as these may open up a new field of investigation regarding cases in which machinery (notably motor cars) is stopped, supposedly by a UFO. Could this be the result of the witness's own subconscious mind (operating through psycho-kinesis of the poltergeist type) revolting against the machine technology which has deprived mankind of so much fantasy and appreciation of the 'useless' things of nature? What better way to thumb one's nose at technology than by stopping a motor car - the prime symbol of our motorised, machine-orientated, rat-race society?

Such speculation need not contradict the presence of an immediate physical cause, employed by the mind, in the production of such effects. Poltergeist energy has been recorded as a magnetic field in Russia (at least, a magnetic field has been recorded as associated with poltergeist phenomena) in the studies of Nelya Mikhailova, and it would not be surprising if electro-magnetic waves could not be produced by such effects. Thus the recent research at the Centre for UFO Studies, indicating that failure of car headlights may be caused by a blast of microwaves (the parabolic headlight reflector acting to concentrate the radiation at the focus - which, of course, is occupied by the bulb - thereby burning out the bulb filament), and the above suggestion may not be contradictory. However, microwaves were unlikely to have been responsible for early cases in which fuel lamps 'died' and horse-drawn carriages stopped at the approach of phantom vehicles!

PP also would seem to explain another puzzling aspect of the UFO phenomenon, i.e. the uncanny manner in which new developments in UFO reports follow publication of science fiction plots. This cannot, as might at first be thought, be explained in terms of witnesses reading science fiction stories and subsequently hallucinating the plot, as the witnesses have seldom heard of the works which, strangely, predict their sighting. Vallee points out some of these amazing coincidences in Passport to Magonia, including the instance of a UFO-caused power failure and subsequent contactee experience in Arthur Koestler's Twilight Bar - a play written in 1933, and the reference to car stalling by UFOs in Bernard Newman's book The Flying Saucer.

It is also odd to notice how UFO reports seem to run ahead of our own technology, such as the airship flap of 1897, the ghost fliers of the 1930s and the ghost rockets of the 1940s and, to some extent,

the ghost space ships of the 1950s and on to the present day.

Perhaps another phenomenon which I have noticed on several occasions, but which I have never seen discussed, could be relevant here, although at first sight it seems totally unconnected with UFOs. I am referring to the apparent coincidence of several independent people hitting upon the same invention or theory at virtually the same time. A good historical example is the invention of the telescope, almost simultaneously, by Lippersheim and Galileo, but there are many other examples.

The unlucky inventor reaching the patent office just in time to see someone else with an identical invention coming out of the door is now something of a joke, but a similar phenomenon has been noted in other respects as well. I have, on more than one occasion, been struck with a wild speculation on some subject, only to find a little later that Dr This or Professor That put forward the same speculation (worked out more fully) at about the same time. Other people have reported similar events sometimes adding the remark 'I should have been an inventor I'm always having ideas that someone else overseas comes up with!'

Furthermore, radical social movements also have the ability to appear first in reverie, if my own experience can once more be taken as a guide. I wonder how many 'psychic predictions' owe their origin to such prophetic reverie?

However, I do not believe these events to be prophetic in the true sense of that term, any more than I believe Jules Verne predicted the first moon landing. What we seem to have here is a general mental tendency among the population in general the time for such new developments, ideas, inventions or movements has become

ripe, and similar ideas occur simultaneously in different minds. New developments wait to happen, in other words, and perhaps the real difference between the 'ordinary' man and the inventor or reformer is that the latter is more perceptive to, and confident about, the ideas which he feels to be in the air.

Before speculating upon how this might apply to UFOs, there is an added complication which should be mentioned. Some years ago, the monkey population on a Japanese island was shown how to take food to the water's edge and wash it. To everyone's surprise, the food-washing craze caught on remarkably quickly among that island's population and, even more puzzling, spread to a neighbouring island even though the monkey populations of these two islands were never in contact.

This, to me at least, strongly suggests some natural, open-ended (i.e. non-directional) telepathic influence, and I wonder if the phenomenon of coincidental inventions may not have a similar explanation. Could these 'ideas in the air really be the work of a 'mind' created by the subconscious linking-up of all our individual minds, by some basic form of telepathy?

If such a telepathic link does exist, may this collective mind not be able to exert the kind of psycho-kinetic powers that individual minds can create (each person's brain, perhaps, contributing an almost infinitesimal amount of psycho-kinetic force to the whole), and might not this global psycho-kinesis be able to objectify, like an apparition, various collective ideas? In other words, 'ideas in the air' might find their way into art and novels through the channels of certain minds, and they might also be objectified, in apparition form, through this collective psychic faculty, if it really exists. On this hypothesis, the UFOs are, quite literally, psychically

projected science fiction dramas!

That the human imagination (at least the visionary imagination of the deep subconscious) operates according to laws equally as rigid as physical nature has been strongly implied by the work of Van Dusen in the field of hallucination. He found from an extensive study of mental patients of varying backgrounds and suffering from differing illnesses, that hallucinated 'beings' have a curious life of their own, a separate personality from the patient, and a remarkable constancy of action, irrespective of the patient's own background.

Furthermore, he found that hallucinated beings can be subdivided into two classes; the 'Lower Order' and the 'Higher Order,' the former being much more common, and he further discovered that these orders corresponded in detail with Swedenborg's devils (Lower Order) and angels (Higher Order). Similarities also seem apparent between the lower and higher orders of beings reported by contactees.

However, whether human imagination can create holograms with apparent mass, and thereby project its creations into the physical world, has never been proved, although some tantalising evidence does exist to suggest that it may be possible. Thus, may not materialisations at seances be explained in this manner, and possibly the legendary (?) golem of Medieval sorcery? And if one mind can create such a hologram, may not our hypothetical collective mind be able to do much better?

Also, it must always be remembered that the possibility of discarnate intelligences should not be overlooked. Van Dusen was aware of this and speculated that the 'hallucinated' beings of his

patients might (though he seemed to doubt it) be separate entities and not mere pieces of the patient's own personality. Many cases of hauntings and possession do seem to indicate the existence of separate paraphysical entities, and such a realisation further complicates an already complicated situation.

Many readers will, no doubt, object to the nature of such speculation, considering it unfitting in a discussion which is attempting to be scientific. However, I think it is justified for a number of reasons.

First, it is no less scientific than any other theory of UFOs, and it brings in no hypotheses which cannot be reasonably supported by the findings of paraphysics. The controversial nature of those findings, and even of paraphysics itself, can logically be settled sooner or later by the scientific means of theory and experiment.

Secondly, if UFOs are a manifestation of something paraphysical, the whole position of UFO research could be faced with some drastic soul-searching. In other words, are researchers meddling with something too big for them at present?

The word 'psychedelic' is used a lot nowadays. It means 'mind opening' or 'mind expanding'. We know that there is more mind dosed than open - we use less than a quarter of our brain, and most of our mental processes go on at levels beyond our knowing. Yet the psychic, Mathew Manning, uses about three per cent more brain than normal, and with this can (if the reports are accurate) cause poltergeist phenomena in grand measure. Is it really wise to pursue something which may be able to open up a hundred per cent of the brain?

Perhaps nothing in UFO research can do this - I would be rather surprised if it could - but the reports of poltergeists surrounding close encounter witnesses, and the mysteriously increasing intelligence of many who have had spectacular UFO experiences, suggest that some part of the brain, usually dormant, is at times activated by a UFO encounter - or, alternatively, the UFO encounter and the brain activation could both be symptoms of some deep-seated psychic process.

Researchers have more than once pointed out that both UFO events and occult rituals strongly favour the irrational (they both stimulate the irrational regions of the psyche - those parts of the mind-brain system not used so much in our 'rational' society). One psychiatrist quoted by Vallee (*) mentions that such a confrontation with the irrational confuses the mind and is often employed as a hypnotic aid. He maintains that in such a confused state, the mind is open to psychic influences or to deeply symbolic material from the subconscious.

---

[*] J Vallee, 'Investigating The 7 Zones of the UFO Phenomenon' 'UFO Report', Winter 1975.

So is our collective mind presenting us with a global ritual of the irrational, leading us into a chicken and egg situation of increasing collective confusion and increasing psychic/psychedelic influence, leading ... where? A new dark age, as Clark, Coleman and John Keel suspect? Is UFO publicity feeding this 'myth of the irrational'? Is all this UFO-talk tugging at our conception of the world actually tearing us apart mentally and spiritually?

If PP is correct, somebody had better find answers to these

questions - fast!

~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~

6 - Contacteeism - the Religion of the Flying Saucer

There is a third reason why so much time was spent on PP relative to the other hypotheses. PP is the only hypothesis which readily explains one of the darkest and most controversial aspects of the entire UFO phenomenon; contacteeism - the mysticism or religion which has grown up around the UFO experience.

Many researchers, especially of the more conservative variety, do not admit contacteeism as a bona fide part of the UFO phenomenon at all, hoping that by suitably dividing all reports into the scientific and religious camps, they may be able to concentrate on the former whilst relegating the latter to the waste-paper backet as the work of cranks.

This, as I have already said earlier in this work, results from biased thinking and can only give rise to equally biased and restricted conclusions, as there is really no hard evidence on which to base such a radical division of reports (as has already been argued in Chapter 2, where the continuity of Type 3 Close Encounters and contactee encounters was discussed).

The existence of PP as a serious hypothesis at very least opens the possibility of the contactee experience being right in the midst of the UFO phenomenon - far from being a spurious appendage, it might (and I stress might) hold the key to the whole mystery.

Something approaching contacteeism has, from time to time, appeared in spiritualistic circles and the like. For instance, the medium Helene Smith, during the closing years of the last century, received messages allegedly from a Martian calling himself Astane,

as well as from a variety of more conventional spirits, and, long before this, Swedenborg conversed with little men having booming voices, allegedly inhabitants of the moon.

However, the modern wave of contacteeism did not burst upon the world until, understandably enough, ETI had become widely disseminated among the general public as a reasonable explanation for UFOs. Prior to about 1950, belief in life on other planets was a mere intellectual thing - one either believed in the possibility or one did not - but there was no direct influence on mundane affairs. There may or may not be life on Mars, but whether or no, life on Earth proceeded as usual.

However, all this was changed by the appearance of UFOs and the serious suggestion that these objects might be evidence of visitation by alien life-forms. It is interesting to ponder on the change in public opinion brought about by a few well-attested sightings of a not overly spectacular phenomenon which had been known to scattered people since time immemorial, coupled with some books and articles (principally the writings of McDonald) associating this phenomenon with a speculation which had been floating around scientific circles for hundreds of years. Such were the ingredients for a revolution in thinking unequalled since the so-called 'enlightenment'!

It should be obvious that the flying saucer craze had more ingredients than these alone. Something much more subtle was quite clearly at work, and this something was, at least in part, surely the social conditions existing in the late 40s and early 50s. The War had educated people to the realisation of change, science was being brought increasingly to the people as a whole by the ever-enlarging media, and an era of uncertainty was clearly

dawning in which old values and accepted ideas would be subjected to ruthless examination.

Against this sociological background, belief not merely in the reality of a previously undocumented phenomenon (the UFO) but in one particular and socially appealing explanation for this phenomenon (ETI), quickly took root. But I cannot help wondering if another factor may not also have been operative the collective mind hypothesised in the previous chapter.

Be this as it may, the collective mind of society (in the literal or metaphorical sense) was ready for the contactee myth by the early- to mid-1950s when Adamski's works burst upon the book stalls and were greedily devoured by millions of people.

It is probably pointless to become too concerned as to whether Adamski really believed he had been taken for rides in UFOs (i.e. whether his experiences were real as he remembered them), whether his books were dreamed up as fiction and dished up as fact, or whether he was a raving lunatic. Following the suggestion that much, if not all, of the UFO experience comes from the mind (individual or collective), such a distinction is, in the last analysis, irrelevant.

If Adamski's works were lies, all this means is that they were creations of his mind under the power of his will (he was aware that they were his own creations), whereas if they were records of visions or experiences which he believed to have had objective reality, they were simply creations of his mind which were not under the influence of his will (i.e. he was not aware that his mind was creating the experience). Either way, if our view is correct, they were mental creations and the hoax/genuine experience

dichotomy becomes of secondary importance.

What is important is that Adamski unleashed a powerful myth upon society - a myth which exerted strong appeal to some of the deepest emotions of man; some of the greatest hopes and darkest fears lingering and festering below the threshold of consciousness were laid bare by the works of Adamski. Soon, others were to follow; undoubtedly many climbing on the Adamski bandwagon to make a dishonest dollar (and, incidentally, adding their two cents worth to the contactee myth) but many more sincerely believing that they had experienced communication with alien beings. Many of this latter group never publicised their experiences beyond conversations with a few friends, and many more must remain totally unknown.

At the present time it would be impossible to ascertain the extent of contactee beliefs, or even to define the boundaries of what might legitimately be termed contacteeism. Certainly, though, there are many thousands of people who would claim direct communication (one or many times) with alien intelligences, and there would be many more who believe that such is possible and is, in fact, granted to a chosen few. It is also quite apparent that the general contactee belief is spreading rapidly and is even overtaking spiritualism as the acceptable occult practice.

Perhaps Fleet Street still holds to the conservative approach, but a growing number of mediums in the USA are finding their 'messages' coming from Ashtar, Orion and their space brethren, rather than from Napoleon and the other dear and faithful departed spirits of yester-year. It does not seem to bother such mediums that the messages are essentially the same, and that the method of delivery is also quite constant. In fact, certain radical spiritualists

who have embraced contacteeism more than others have even reached the belief that the 'Summerland' (the spiritualist heaven) described in such detail for so many years as an etheric plane of especially fine vibrations (whatever this may mean) is, after all, not in the etheric realm at all. It is on another planet!

Not all spiritualists accept this innovation, but while the two camps of spiritualists are deciding where their respective heavens really are, psychic after psychic is swinging over to the contactee camp and the whole occult movement is taking the UFO to its heart. (One of the latest to have 'gone over' to contacteeism is Mrs Jeanne Dixon, the 'queen' of psychics, who now claims to have received impressions that the UFOs are spaceships from an unknown solar planet, and - Womens Libbers take note - are piloted by women.)

On the other hand, some of the more strictly ufological contactees have added a new dimension to the movement - political violence! Though at the present time this aspect of the contactee experience is fortunately only a minor one, the unhappy incident of Aladino Felix's terrorist activities in Brazil, and his bizarre plan to take over the government of that country, should be enough to give serious pause to the idea that contacteeism is just a harmless crackpot cult!

It should also be remembered that, if the report is accurate, Felix was led into his contactee experience (and from there into revolutionary terrorism) after a fairly conventional UFO sighting. As we are all, presumably, liable to experience such a sighting, we all may be potentially vulnerable to the same series of events.

Even if not everyone is able to enter into the UFO experience, the proportion of those who can is still large enough to make the possibility of vast numbers of fanatical contactees a very real one,

and this must never be forgotten by the investigator.

Likewise, there seems a very real likelihood that the type of psychological-psychic shock (for want of a better term) by means of which the occurrence of a UFO experience turns someone into a contactee, may also occur without the person necessarily becoming a conscious and 'practising' contactee but, nevertheless, still suffering some unspecified psychological and/or psychic damage. In particular, we have the odd case of Barney and Betty Hill who, according to the initial reports, suffered a fairly usual close encounter UFO experience. It was only after the persistent occurrences of bad dreams that a totally new, and semi-contactee, depth was found to the experience, in the form of the now famous hypnotic memories of an abduction by humanoids.

It is somewhat alarming to remember the number of times that physiological symptoms similar to those suffered by Betty Hill (bad dreams, headaches, etc.) are reported by witnesses after a close encounter (and sometimes a not-so-close encounter) with a UFO. How many times, I wonder, would hypnosis of such people uncover memories of experiences as bizarre as that of the Hills? What effects could such subconscious memories have upon the witness's psychological development, after festering in the recesses of his mind?

The general socio-psychological reasons favouring the growth and spread of contacteeism are not hard to find. Science has created its own myths; its own pantheon of abstract forces and mysterious particles, its own promise of a paradise of advanced civilisation far away on some distant planet. Is it really very surprising that a religion would sooner or later form around a science or (more likely, as true science contains too many shifting ideas to form the

basis of a religious faith) some form of pseudo-scientism?

The pseudo-scientific beliefs arising from the phenomenon of UFO reports could hardly be surpassed as a basis for a new religion of the scientific age. ETI, in one fell swoop, gives materialistic man the chance to regain his gods in the form of highly advanced extraterrestrials who may even have visited Earth long ago and been literally worshipped then, and it provides a credible (to the materialistic mind) counterpart of 'heaven' - a Utopian society on some distant planet.

Even the more traditional revelations of religion seem, to people of a certain twist of mind, more credible in the mouths of spacemen than in the recorded sayings of accepted prophets. Thus we have the curious but undeniable fact that many people will not accept the reality of God or spiritual life from the biblical writings, but fairly jump at the chance to accept a more garbled version of the same thing received by telepathy from an alleged spaceman, thinking that the latter has a greater scientific basis than the former (which, of course, is quite the reverse of the true situation).

Possibly the greater ease with which one can combine the beliefs of the new substitute religions such as contacteeism with the moral codes (or lack of same!) of the so-called permissive society, is another reason why people frequently shy away from traditional religions and look for salvation from the 'saucers'. However, the entire contactee phenomenon cannot be explained away simply in social terms - it is not merely the opiate of mid-twentieth century materialists. There is more to it than this, and it seems fairly clear that this 'something more' takes the form of a definite set of psychological/ psychic/mystic experiences.

Whether these experiences, or the propensity to have such experiences, can be ultimately explained in social terms is another question (and one which rival schools of psychologists could, undoubtedly, argue about until Doomsday), but the reduction of the belief in contacteeism to something social (omitting all reference to experiences) is as far from the mark as an explanation of Islam with no mention of the teachings of Mohammed.

But just what is the experience?

We can immediately reject the literal interpretation placed upon it by the contactees themselves, i.e. that they have actually been contacted by beings from other planets who are actually just who they claim to be. We can be quite dogmatic in this rejection, I feel, because of the recent scientific discoveries concerning conditions on the planets Venus and Mars, where many of these 'aliens' claim to originate, to say nothing of the conflict between the nature of the planetary system in general as discovered by science and as revealed by the aliens (for instance, contactees tell us that there is no atmosphere on Jupiter and that there are fertile lands on the far side of the moon).

It is still just possible that the aliens are genuine, but that they are not from the planets from which they claim to come. For some reason known only to themselves, they deliberately lie to their contactees in an attempt to mislead them. The same thing could be said for time travellers from our own distant future, but why anyone, space traveller or time traveller, should go to such elaborate lengths to mislead an already sufficiently confused humanity is anybody's guess.

We will, therefore, leave this far-fetched possibility in favour of

some more plausible ideas, the most likely of which seems to be the association of the contactee experience with the general field of abnormal psychological experiences.

Probably the most promising work done to date in this field is the research of Wilson van Dusen (see the article 'Hallucinations as the World of Spirits' in Frontiers of Consciousness -John White, editor). Van Dusen engaged in considerable research into the phenomenon of hallucination as it appears in mental patients, and from this research reached some surprising conclusions.

First, the mechanism of hallucination and the nature of the hallucinations themselves remained constant, irrespective of the illness from which the patient was suffering. Van Dusen found the same types of hallucination experienced alike by alcoholics and schizophrenics and even seniles. Secondly, he found the hallucinations to be remarkably constant and to reveal the presence of definite laws of operation. Thirdly, he was able to draw quite strict parallels between these hallucinations and the angels and devils of Swedenborg's visions.

These findings led Van Dusen to suppose that these hallucinations form a constant (and generally unperceived) part of the subconscious mental life of all human beings, irrespective of the age in which they live or the cultural background from which they come. Under certain conditions, such as those represented by what we call insanity, or by the self-induced meditative states mastered by people like Swedenborg, the barrier of consciousness is severed and the conscious mind is able to perceive these normally hidden mental features.

Van Dusen found that the hallucinated personalities behave as

separate individuals, even to the extent of reacting to an ink blot test in a manner different to that of the patient himself. Furthermore, a variety of hallucinated personalities may be experienced by the single patient and these personalities may even talk and interact among themselves.

Even more interesting was the discovery of two distinct orders of hallucinated beings - the Lower Order and the Higher Order, as Van Dusen termed them. Van Dusen was impressed to find that these two orders corresponded in exact fashion to the devils and angels with whom Swedenborg claimed to have conversed. The Lower Order, like Swedenborg's devils, are tormenting to the patient, they are anti-religious and fond of making obscene or filthy suggestions and then tormenting the patient for having had such thoughts go through his mind.

On the other hand, the Higher Order (corresponding to Swedenborg's angels) are far more congenial and, it would seem, more intelligent. Unlike the Lower Order, they appear to be in possession of information which extends beyond the knowledge of the individual mind of the patient, and they are able to convey this information, usually not by verbal means, but by the use of symbolic visions. Imagery of light (and even of globe shaped lights) is employed in the experiences of these hallucinated personalities, and the experience of the Higher Order tends to have a therapeutic effect upon the patient.

It seems that the Higher Order, although experienced more rarely than the Lower Order, is the potentially more powerful of the two and can exercise considerable control over the Lower, but cannot itself be made subject to the Lower. Similarly, the hallucinated personalities of the Higher Order have far greater knowledge of the

Lower Order than the latter has of them.

Van Dusen's main interest was in drawing the comparison between these hallucinations and the experiences of Swedenborg. However, it seems possible that similar comparisons exist between them and the various aspects of the fairy faith. Medieval occultists habitually drew a distinction between fairies of the earth and fairies of the air; the former comprising dwarf creatures such as gnomes, whereas the latter comprises white beings who, apparently, live in the air. Whether the distinction between the black or dark coloured earth fairies and the white air fairies is symbolic of character differences between these two classes or not, it is true that gnomes and similar dwarfs were much feared by those who believed in them, and a pact with them was tantamount to deling with the Devil himself.

The similarities between the earth fairies and the reported dwarfs associated with UFOs has been remarked upon by many authorities on the subject, and it seems that there is good reason to believe that the same mechanism is operating in both cases. Could this mechanism be the same one found by Van Dusen - the rigid laws governing hallucinated personalities; those laws which seem to be (judging by the variety of patients used in Van Dusen's sample) operative in all people and as invariable as the laws governing physical nature?

If this speculation is correct, the similarity between ordinary occupant cases and contactee cases may indeed be closer than has hitherto been suspected, even by the most radical researcher. Remember Van Dusen's finding (and Swedenborg's finding, for that matter) that the Lower Order is anti-religious and contacts the patient only for reasons to torment? Could this be associated with the fact that we don't find contactees receiving religious messages

from the 'little man' type of UFO occupant?

Indeed, all through the history of folklore the dwarf race of supernatural beings has always been associated with an attitude towards religion which is either indifferent or outright hostile (though we do find occasional stories of fairies weeping for a relationship with God which they know can never be theirs). Similarly, the UFO dwarfs, when they display any feeling towards religion at all, appear hostile, an attitude spectacularly displayed by the snatching of the crucifix and rosary carried by Jose Antonio.

It is interesting to note also that the little men who had abducted Antonio were thrown into confusion after the crucifix incident, (*) and to further note that this episode was followed by a vision, seen by Antonio but not by the dwarfs, of a 'Christ-like' entity, who apparently gave some message of hope to Antonio. Antonio was, according to his report, released soon afterwards.

---

[*] B. Aleixo, 'Flying Saucer Review' Nov./Dec. 1973.

This seems to me to show close parallels to the Lower Order-Higher Order confrontation sometimes suffered by Van Dusen's patients. The dwarfs represented the Lower Order personalities, anti-religious, tormenting and threatening. The experience of such personalities threatened Antonio's wellbeing; however he was rescued by the intervention of the Higher Order hallucinated personality who could not be seen by the Lower Order personalties (exactly in accord with Van Dusen and Swedenborg) although, apparently, exercising some control over them, to the extent that they released Antonio from their influence. In other words, the Higher Order hallucination had a therapeutic effect on Antonio,

just as Van Dusen finds such hallucinations have a similar effect upon his patients.

Both Van Dusen and Swedenborg found the Higher Order of angelic experiences to be more rare than the Lower Order or demonic ones, and it would seem that this trend continues through both the fairy faith and UFO contacts. However, there exist a few reports which may be interpreted as involving Higher Order hallucinations, hidden among piles of UFO reports. One of these involves the experience of TV repairman and ham radio operator (radio hams are joining the ranks of the contactees in large numbers, according to investigator John Keel) named Sidney Padrick. On the morning of January 30, 1965, Padrick experienced the landing of a UFO (witnessed, from a distance, by other people as well) and met a 'ufonaut' who said his name was 'Zeeno'. Zeeno was of normal size and fairly human in appearance, except that his nose and chin were very pointed and his fingers unusually long.

Soon, Mr Paddick found himself being taken on a tour of Zeeno's UFO, a tour which included a room somewhat like a temple, where Zeeno suggested that Padrick pay homage to God. This experience evidently was an intensely religious one for Padrick (previously not a very religious man) and seemed to be almost mystical in nature. It seems to have left quite an impression upon Padrick, but I am not aware of his subsequent intellectual or spiritual development, if any.

Another possible Higher Order experience concerns two men who were confronted with a landed UFO complete with human-like occupants and an instrument like a TV set, on the screen of which three consecutive pictures flashed - the first a waterfall scene, the second a mushroom-cloud explosion, and the third a repeat of the

waterfall scene, but, this time, the fall was dry. Not a word was spoken during this experience, but the symbolic message was quite clear. And, remember, non-verbal, symbolic messages appear to be the means of communication employed by hallucinated personalities of the Higher Order.

Is it possible that the witnesses of such UFO events as these are experiencing deep and even spiritual insights from the most hidden regions of the collective mind; insights which in earlier years would have been manifested through the medium of more traditional mystic visions, but which are now clothed in the garb of modern science fiction?

The answer may well be in the affirmative. But an inflated value must not be placed upon such experiences for this reason. It should be remembered that the great mystics of ages past, and their modern counterparts, not only encouraged their students to seek the Invisible in preference to symbolic vision, but actively discouraged too much stress on visions of any form. St John of the Cross, for instance, gave some very stern warnings to anyone who would put value in visionary and seemingly supernatural experience.

St John emphasised the fact that the true quest of the mystic lay beyond anything that the mind could symbolise. But he also recognised that on the way to such a state, as it were, the mind must go through the 'hypnogoguic state' (to use today's terminology) half-way between sleep and waking life, and in this state visionary experiences similar to these experienced by Swedenborg, Van Dusen's patients and, we may add, mediums and contactees, most readily take place. St John believed (correctly, it would seem) that paying too much attention to these visions would

lead the mystic away from the main purpose of his profession and prevent any further spiritual advancement.

Worse, it may very probably result in spiritual decline, with the mystic claiming direct revelations from God and the like, when in actual fact, he is only viewing the creations of his own mind. For this reason, St John and most great mystics criticise visionary experience, although recognising that some visions may, in themselves, be good.

Not all visions are good, however, even when judged on their intrinsic worth alone. In theological terms, the Devil featured more strongly than God in visions - even the visions of genuine mystics were frequently 'bad' or diabolical. It may be worthwhile to note also that many of these visions (both good and bad) gave the appearance of being objective and corporeal, and the bad ones in particular were not infrequently associated with phenomena which today we would class as poltergeist. In other words, the visions did not seem to be wholly confined to the subjective, but on occasions produced physical effects, just as today's UFO and contact experiences at times produce similar effects.

Could there exist some psychic mechanism by which the hallucinated personalities of either order are projected (hologram fashion?) on to the objective world and there take on a temporary quasi-materiality?

This is, I know, a very far-fetched suggestion and perhaps I should apologise once more for bringing the subject up in two consecutive chapters of a book which is intended to be scientific. However, I justify myself by pointing out that it is only speculation and, furthermore, it would if it is indeed found to contain some

truth explain a lot of very puzzling phenomena encountered in both UFO and paraphysical research, to say nothing of a variety of seemingly impossible portents recorded in former ages.

It seems to me that research into the phenomenon of the poltergeist offers the most promising chances for solving this enigma. If it can be shown how the mind can concentrate energy to such an extent that psychokinetic phenomena take place on a grand and violent scale, it might be possible to extend this research to enable us to understand whether this energy projection can create what Jacques Vallee termed 'three-dimensional holograms with mass'. If this can be demonstrated to be true, many mysteries (including the UFO problem) will be added to the 'solved' list, but of course we are a long way from that and it may be only a pipe dream.

Suppose for the moment, purely for the sake of argument, that it is not a pipe dream. Suppose that we are justified in postulating the existence of such mental projections. What does this do to the contactee problem?

One might be able to argue that this movement has as its foundation a mental projection; a projection which (due to some as yet unknown faculty of mind) is able to take on a quasi-objective reality and be experienced as something over and above a hallucination on the part of the person having the experience. This confrontation will itself increase the contactee's faith in the objective reality of what he experiences and therefore add to the vivacity of the projection, and so on ad infinitum. In the words of Blake, the contactee

'Throws the sand into the wind

And the wind blows it back again.'

Whether there is any truth in the suggestion that some form of poltergeist-like projection is operative or not, the self-generating feature of contacteeism does seem to be a fact; at least, this feature is part of the movement - opinions differ as to whether it is the movement's essential feature. Many contactees, and even ordinary witnesses and investigators, seem to become caught up in this aspect of the phenomenon, and at times (if we can believe the reports) it becomes quite frightening.

People complain of physiological symptoms of the kind encountered by missionaries as 'possession' (unaccountable faints, nightmares, headaches, loss of memory, etc.) which are frequently accompanied by strange psychological and psychic events - hallucinations, poltergeist effects including ringing of telephones (sometimes disconnected phones) and malfunctioning of television and radio receivers, as well as the more usual poltergeist antics (household objects flying around the room and the like) and night visits by apparitions somewhat resembling the incubi and succubi of the Middle Ages.

Then there are the traditionally most frightening aspects of the whole phenomenon - the 'Three Man in Black'. Allegedly, these three sinister gentlemen have a very nasty habit of terrorising contactees and other witnesses half out of their minds. Various investigators have reportedly quit UFO research completely because of the interference of the 'MIBs'.

How much of this is to be believed? Frankly, I don't know. If I was asked how much of this had objective reality, I would trust that the answer 'very little' would not be far wrong.

Of course, there is always the possibility that many reported MIBs are true flesh and blood human beings - people with sick minds or warped senses of humour who get some kind of thrill from cashing in on a legend. However, I doubt that more than a small proportion of cases can be explained in terms of such hoaxes. Rather I think that if the MIB reports are true at all (and some seem to be genuine), the true explanation lies in some form of hallucination or, possibly, in our projection mechanism, if indeed such a thing exists.

In other words, I would guess that this aspect of the phenomenon is self-generated and, whether we are correct in assuming this of the entire phenomenon or not, there does seem to be evidence, accepted by most researchers in this area of the UFO problem, in support of the self-generation of much of the MIB phenomenon.

This evidence lies in the fact that the effects are cumulative, increasing as the fear of the witness increases. This dog-chasing-its-own-tail effect keeps on gathering momentum, but once the witness realises how dependent the phenomenon is upon his own fear, and once he resolves to simply ignore it as he would a bad dream, the phenomenon quickly fades out.

If the phenomenon was independent of the witness's mind, I doubt if the effects would melt away like this. It may also be relevant to remember that states of mind are also represented at the physical level by certain brain wave patterns, and it may not be too far-fetched to suggest that the brain wave patterns or the areas of the brain activated during a state of fear may be the ones conducive to the projection effect postulated above, in a similar manner to the state of controlled rage being conducive to extreme psycho-kinesis, according to experiments with Mrs Mikhailova in the USSR.

It may also be relevant to note that MIBs and the like behave somewhat as the Lower Order hallucinated personalities behave, i.e. in an antagonistic and destructive manner. The same may be said for the 'bellicose dwarfs' of the more traditional UFO type 3 close encounters. Even though the latter seldom speak (in strong contrast to the Lower Order hallucinated beings of Van Susen's patients), their actions may well be doing the speaking for them, and it must always be remembered that the occultists of the Middle Ages associated both tormenting voices and dwarf beings with demons.

Medieval occultists and theologians also noted diabolical supernatural beings with surprising similarities to our Men in Black, and they also recognised the propensity of demons to pass along messages which sounded anything but demonic. The Devil can become as an angel of light, a great spiritual authority once said. 'Spirits lie' added Swedenborg.

Similarly, Van Dusen found Lower Order hallucinated personalities claiming to be all sorts of people - even including Jesus, and then making remarks which the real Jesus would never have voiced. Perhaps Lower Order hallucinated personalities can imitate the ways of the Higher Order, especially if the patient has already experienced a Higher Order hallucination and has, therefore, the memory of it in his mind, to be used by Lower Order hallucinated personalities.

Could the usual contactee experience, in which the contactee communicates with personalities which appear to be (superficially at least) of the Higher Order but pass along nothing but falsehoods in the manner of the Lower Order, be examples of Lower Order hallucinated personalities imitating the activities of the Higher

Order?

Such questions as these need to be answered by researchers into the UFO phenomenon, and not merely for the reason of academic interest. If the contactee movement can be explained in this manner, the similarities with the hallucinations of mental patients becomes plain. Indeed, many of the beliefs of contactees (beliefs allegedly passed along by the space brothers) are reminiscent of beliefs held by mental patients (passed to them by Lower Order hallucinated personalities?). Beliefs such as an intellectual elite ruling the world, for instance, are frequently found in both groups.

It may well be that contactees are in desperate need of psychological help. Indeed, if contacteeism and ordinary UFO experiences are as closely related as I tend to believe, many non-contactee witnesses may need help also, especially in view of the psychic disturbances not infrequently reported even by witnesses of some nocturnal lights!

However, merely straightening out people who become involved in UFO phenomena or contacteeism may not be sufficient. The UFO has generated a myth - the ETI or 'flying saucer' myth - which, whether true or false, has become a dogma to be mindlessly accepted by some and mindlessly rejected by others, but, and here is the important point, known to both.

In other words, we have all had our minds filled with details of a myth; a myth which incorporates some of the most potent symbols known to the human mind; a myth which arouses the hopes and fears of contemporary men and which differs only superficially from the fairy faith of former ages and must, therefore, incorporate certain constant laws of the imagination - laws which govern

powerful psychological processes.

If our speculations concerning the findings of Van Dusen are correct, we may also add that this myth, when manifested to the individual mind, leads many into insanity. We find mental patients experiencing voices and seeing people, just as contactees hear voices and see people. We see contactees becoming so involved in their experiences that their social life totally breaks down, just as patients withdraw into a world of their own in the last stages of insanity.

And yet we, through the media, through public meetings, through publications by UFO societies dedicated to the spreading of the ETI, feed this dangerous, irrational and powerfully symbolic myth constantly to the public!!!

Are we doing our best to create an insane society, a new dark age as UFO investigators such as Coleman, Clark, Keel, Vallee and others believe to be potentially within the power of the UFO movement?

The previous chapter finished on this note. I hope the reader considered it then, and I hope he will consider it afresh now. Personally, I would like to see more future UFO research turn away from investigations of sightings and concentrate rather more on the psychological and sociological aspects. I would like to see contacteeism looked upon rather as a global psychic/psychological illness to be investigated and cured rather than an objective phenomenon to be merely investigated.

True, part of the phenomenon seems to be objective and should be investigated as such, but it would be better if this was done quietly

and at a low key, bearing in mind all the while that, balancing upon these seemingly innocent objective events, there is a mythological superstructure which is forcing its way like a cancer into the intestines of our nominally scientific, nominally Christian nominally civilised, yet surprisingly superstitious, basically pagan and still largely barbaric society. A society more scientific, more Christian and more civilised than our own might be able to handle such a movement, but then, would such a society as that have ever witnessed contacteeism?

~~~~~~~
~~~~~~~

Conclusion

To end a book about such a subject as the UFO phenomenon with the word 'conclusion' is surely something of a bad joke for which I should really apologise. If there is any conclusion, it is simply that there is no conclusion. We may conclude the book, but we reach no conclusion as to the nature of the subject of the book.

Yet perhaps the solution of the problem is within reach today. Perhaps the masses of data on sightings, the numerous interviews with witnesses and the hours spent researching by dedicated men and women have already laid bare the solution but we are all looking at the evidence in the wrong way to see it. Perhaps, someday soon, someone will look at the data collected in a fresh way and see the solution in a flash. This has happened many times in the history of science and in the history of problem-solving generally, and we can hope that the UFO problem will prove to be another example.

One of the great problems encountered so far by researchers has been the 'ink blot' nature of the phenomenon, i.e. there has always been a tendency to project one's own preconceptions (especially subconscious preconceptions) into the data and then read out what one subconsciously expects or wishes, in the manner of a psychologist's patient reading a picture into an ink blot.

Perhaps this accounts, at last in part, for the constant irrationality and absurdity which the phenomenon seems to display - absurd sightings, absurd patterns, absurd hypotheses. The subconscious love absurdity and, we are told by psychologists and hypnotists, it is opened to suggestion by a confrontation with the absurd - a

confrontation which confuses the normal thinking process of the rational consciousness just long enough to let the absurdities of the subconscious filter through.

Then, what greater absurdity is there than contacteeism and the beliefs which it expounds - beliefs which, if our argument has been correct, come from the most stygian depths of the subconscious and permeate the collective mind far beyond the company of the contactees themselves?

How many interpretations of UFO sightings have been moulded by these beliefs, without the witness ever realising it?

Yet, as we have seen, certain constants do keep recurring in UFO reports and it seems pretty clear that some of these betray genuine regularities in the phenomenon itself, rather than psychological constants in the reporting of that phenomenon.

Thus, perhaps the best way in which to conclude this book is to list a number of features which have occurred over and over again in the reports of independent witnesses and which may, therefore, be assumed to point towards some intrinsic property(ies) of the UFO phenomenon. This list will, doubtless, not be exhaustive but at least it will enable some sort of a model of the UFO to be built up and tested against the major hypotheses.

In what follows, these various features of the UFO phenomenon will be listed and briefly discussed, with the list and comparisons with the chief hypotheses then being summarised in tabular form.

(1) They are generally nocturnal. This could suggest either a natural phenomenon occurring more readily under nocturnal conditions, or a secret craft of man-made origin, or a secret craft of

extraterrestrial origin. The similarity with psychic or paraphysical phenomena which are also, traditionally, associated with night, should also be noted.

(2) They are mainly yellow to reddish in colour. This is also the colour range most frequently reported in cases of ball lightning, suggesting some association of the mechanisms operating. This association may be one of identity, but it could also imply that certain types of craft (secret military, or extraterrestrial or from another time) are able to surround themselves with an envelope of ionised air, from which most of the luminous effect arises.

(3) They display a strong tendency to follow the contours of the land, sometimes stopping over bodies of water. This could be explained if the UFOs were very sensitive to the change in the electrical potential of the Earth's electric field. It is well known that considerable electrical variations exist between different altitudes in the lower atmosphere, and if a craft was fitted with a device for measuring the exact potential of the atmosphere and the results of this reading were fed back to an automatic pilot, such a craft would, by keeping to a layer of constant electrical potential, hug the contours of the land exactly in the manner of UFOs.

Presumably, a natural phenomenon of electrical nature may be able to do this as well, but this feature of the UFO, if taken in isolation from all others, would seem best explained in terms of a terrestrial robot aircraft. A spacecraft from another planet is less likely, as such potential differences exist only in the lower atmosphere and the mere fact that the UFO can lock into them seems to imply close association with terrestrial conditions.

The ability of TT or PP to explain this feature is unknown,

although it may be possible to explain much paranormal visual phenomena in electrical terms.

(4) They are frequently said to rotate, principally in a counterclockwise direction. The reason for this is unclear, although it may be relevant to mention that ball lightning is also said to rotate, but I do not know whether there is any preference for counter-clockwise rotation in this case.

(5) They sometimes leave physical traces. This suggests that the objects are solid, at least temporally, or that they are associated with a force sufficiently strong to be able to imitate the effects of a solid object.

(6) Sightings are usually fairly localised. Even spectacular UFOs are not, in general, reported by large numbers of witnesses over a wide area - in strong distinction to brilliant meteors or large, high-altitude balloons. This rather suggests either a vertical approach through the atmosphere or sudden appearance at or near ground level. With ETI the first alternative is possible, though dangerous because of the atmospheric friction involved. TT and PP seem on strongest ground with, perhaps, HA on weakest.

(7) Sudden appearances and disappearances are not uncommon. This seems, at face value, to explain point 6 and would appear to further strengthen the hands of TT and PP in explaining the localised nature of the phenomenon.

(8) High speeds and very rapid accelerations are sometimes reported. This is explained with difficulty by ETI (rapid accelerations would crush occupants, unless further ad hoc assumptions are made) and with even greater difficulty by HA and

NP. TT and PP may be on better ground, although exactly how they would explain this phenomenon is unclear.

(9) Sounds (usually a hum or swish) are sometimes reported, especially, it would seem, from those objects of more solid appearance. Probably explicable by all theories.

(10) Wide variety of shapes and sizes of objects noted. Probably explicable on all theories, although TT and PP seem to be on the best ground.

(11) Low-level sightings seem to avoid places of high population density. Superficially, this looks like a secret operation and, therefore, would seem to support HA in the sense that the artefact in question could be a secret military aircraft.

(12) Sometimes the phenomenon seems to zero in on a particular person, who may suffer considerable parapsychic experiences. PP seems the most obvious explanation of this, but it is possible that the psychic effects could be secondary and that the basic phenomenon may be explicable in other ways.

(13) Entities which appear to be living creatures are often observed in conjunction with the phenomenon. ETI is not on as safe ground as might first appear in explaining this aspect of the phenomenon. TT and PP appear stronger, but HA and MP fail, unless (contrary to the reported data) 'creature' sightings are to be explained as simple hallucinations.

(14) Entities, like the objects themselves, are sometimes said to be luminous. This appears best suited to TT and PP (with PP in the stronger position), but it may be possible to explain such sightings by HA or NP if the entities are explained away as mistaken

interpretations of other luminous effects.

(15) Two-way contact between human beings and these entities is quite widely alleged but such information as is passed along in these contacts is always rather puerile. The similarity between these contacts and spiritualism strongly suggests an explanation within the field of PP. ETI and to some extent TT are virtually parodied by this aspect of the phenomenon.

Most contacts involve either telepathy or the use of a loudspeaker and radio set - however, even this latter set of equipment seems to have a habit of answering questions (allegedly from the depths of space) in a shorter time than would be allowed by radio transmission and reception and, at times, is even alleged to answer the sender's thoughts. Hallucination or psycho-kinesis must be involved here, and it is reasonable to conclude that the 'message' comes from the contactee's own subconscious mind.

(16) Objects and their alleged entities appear to exhibit intelligence, though mostly of a puerile, playful and - at times - even mischievous nature. Again, this aspect of the phenomenon seems to parody ETI and possibly TT, and cannot, therefore, be adequately explained by these theories. PP appears to be the strongest contender as an explanation of this aspect of the UFO phenomenon.

The table below indicates that the particular aspect of the phenomenon listed could probably be explained in terms of the theory under whose heading it appears. The symbol / ? indicates that this is possibly so, X ? that it probably is not so and X that the aspect of the UFO phenomenon being considered is unlikely to be explicable in terms of the indicated theory.

[Insert pic p139]

Where? appears, the situation is considered too uncertain to make any definite statement.

Of course, the above table is very far from the last word on the matter. For one thing, it depends upon the assumption that the actual hypotheses themselves make sense, i.e. that it is not total nonsense to speak about life on other planets, about time travel or about paraphysical phenomena.

Furthermore, it rests on the fact that we have some (more or less vague) notion about what extraterrestrial life-forms would look like and how they would behave; it assumes that we not merely accept the possibility of time travel, but also that we have some notion about how it could be effected (even if this notion does not extend beyond thinking in terms of materialisations and de-materialisations), and it assumes that we have reached the conclusion that the science of paraphysics really does have a bona fide subject matter - a conclusion which not all para-physicists would readily endorse.

We then say, in effect, 'If we can meaningfully speak about these hypotheses, we may then test to see if they are able to explain the various aspects of the UFO phenomenon.'

This is the most that the table can hope to accomplish. Rather, it should be looked upon as an example of how to test UFO hypotheses once more is known about both the phenomenon itself and the reliability of the different hypotheses, than any real conclusion to our present knowledge.

~~~~~~~

End
~~~~~~~